Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
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FBIS-NES-96-077 *19 April 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Saudi Foreign Minister on Lebanon, Arab League Meeting

LD1804130396 Riyadh SPA in English
1245 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 18, SPA — Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister has expressed his happiness over the outcome of the extraordinary meeting of the Arab League Ministerial Council, which ended its deliberations in Cairo last night.

In a statement after the meeting, Prince Sa'ud said "we have concluded the Arab League Ministerial Council meeting and reached a collective decision. We are happy about the results of this meeting," he added.

In response to a question on the American-French initiatives regarding putting an end to the Israeli aggression on Lebanon and asked to specify which of the two initiatives are nearer to the Arab point of view, Prince Sa'ud said "we have not seen these until now."

Earlier in an address before the extraordinary meeting of the Arab League Ministerial Council on Wednesday [17 April] morning, Prince Sa'ud reaffirmed the Kingdom's stand in support of Lebanon and the Lebanese people in facing the continuing Israeli aggression on the Lebanese territory.

He underlined the importance of time in taking a quick decision to face the Israeli aggression.

Prince Sa'ud recalled the address of the Lebanese foreign minister, Faris Buwayz and his request in this context and said "there are steps and measures that could be taken regarding the security or the international contacts. Moreover, there are international contacts now in progress in this context," he added.

"A number of people have died and there is destruction in Lebanon," Prince Sa'ud noted.

The Saudi foreign minister expressed hope that the council would concentrate on an important statement and said remarks made by the Egyptian foreign minister, 'Amr Musa and a summary of the points contained in his speech, "in my point of view could be part of a programme of a scheme of resolution to be drafted during a closed-door or a brief session."

He stressed that the time is running out and said "we should, as far as possible, summarize and reach the positive resolution that could express not only our anger against this aggression but also project our desire to have a fruitful action that could be for the interest of Lebanon and the Arab nation."

Inter-Arab: Saudi Foreign Minister Cited on Talks in Egypt

LD1904090296 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
2128 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Apr (SPA) — Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal announced that he conveyed a message from King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, to His Excellency President Husni Mubarak, president of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

His royal highness said in a press statement following his meeting with President Mubarak in Cairo today that "the message comes within the framework of the continuous consultations between the two states."

His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal said that the results of the emergency meeting of the Arab League's ministerial council were reviewed during the meeting.

His royal highness expressed his satisfaction with the resolution adopted by the council. "We hope it will provide an opportunity for diplomatic contacts to bring about an immediate solution to end the fighting [in Lebanon] so as to end this vicious circle of clashes and preserve Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and the integrity of its territories."

His royal highness expressed his conviction that this will not take place unless Security Council resolution 425 was implemented. This is the ideal solution for all the violence in the region, he added.

His royal highness said: "Even the peace efforts... [SPA ellipsis] and we here as two countries always seek a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis so that these efforts can continue, be fruitful, and serve their purposes."

In answer to a question about holding an Arab summit, His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal said: "In fact, this was not discussed this morning. If the circumstances are favorable for an Arab summit everyone hopes for the Arab world to return to its soundness and that is what we seek."

His royal highness continued: "If the circumstances are favorable the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will not delay in this respect. My conviction is that Egypt will not delay either."

In an answer to a question about last night's five-man meeting — which included, in addition to his royal highness, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and France — and France's efforts to stop the fighting [in Lebanon] Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal said: "We learned from the French minister that he will be in

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Israel today and therefore I have no information about the result of his contacts in Israel."

His royal highness expressed hope that these efforts will succeed in a way that will serve the balanced security of all parties and that the diplomatic contacts will proceed first and foremost from the return of Lebanese lands to Lebanon and balanced security for everyone.

Inter-Arab: Arab Envoys in UK Denounce Support for Israeli 'Aggression'

NC1904112696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1045 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 19 Apr (MENA)— The council of Arab ambassadors in London has strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli aggression against Lebanon. They noted that the aggression has killed many Lebanese civilians, including women and children; caused a massive displacement of civilians in south Lebanon; and destroyed economic facilities.

In a statement received by a MENA correspondent in London, the Arab ambassadors denounced the unbalanced statements that are trying to support and justify the brutal Israeli attack against Lebanon.

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief, Libyan Official Discuss Lockerbie Crisis

NC1804122496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1157 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Apr (MENA)— Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid today received Jum'ah al-Fazzani, the Libyan secretary of the General People's Committee for Unity. During the meeting they reviewed the joint meeting between the seven-member Arab committee and the five-member African committee at the Arab League General Secretariat on Thursday [18 April] to coordinate Arab and African efforts to resolve the Libyan-Western crisis and Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid's moves to address it. They also discussed yesterday's Arab League emergency meeting resolution to determine the approach to the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the means to implement it.

Islamic Affairs

Islamic Affairs: Iran's Velayati Calls For Emergency Session of OIC

LD1904065596 Tehran IRNA in English 0640 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Apr 19, (IRNA) — Iran has called on the secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Hamid Algabid to mobilize aid for the Muslim Lebanese people and call for an emergency session of the OIC foreign ministers.

Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati in a message submitted to Algabid on Thursday [18 April] asked him to urge the U.N. Security Council's permanent members and the international bodies to do whatever in their capacity to bring an immediate halt to the barbaric aggression of the Zionist regime on Lebanon,

Referring to the large scale aggressions of the Zionist regime on Lebanon, Velayati said the attacks show that the Zionist rulers have maintained their policy of aggression ever since they occupied Palestine.

He added that the Zionist regime has ignored the will of the international community by violating internationally recognized principles such as respect for Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Zionists have been using peace gestures as a political tool to attain their objectives, he added.

The message added that the recent tragedies in Lebanon have once again brought deep grief to the hearts of Muslims of the world, those of Iran in particular.

He underlined that the issue of southern Lebanon will remain as long as the region is occupied by the Zionist regime and its mercenaries and as long as the Zionist regime pursued its suppressive, aggressive and expansionist policies.

Velayati added that no one could expect the oppressed Lebanese people to abandon their legitimate and liberation seeking struggles.

The foreign minister said that the crisis in the Middle East and the repetition of Zionists' brutal aggressions on southern Lebanon was deeply rooted in the international community's, particularly Islamic countries,' illogical and weak attitude towards the Zionist regime.

He further said that peace and calm will not be restorted to the region as along as a just and realistic solution is not introduced.

It is regrettable that in the past few months there have been efforts with the provocation of big powers and in line with the deceitful policies of the Zionist regime to portray the rightful struggles of the Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims as terrorist moves with the aim of justifying the savage and inhumane attacks of the Zionists on the occupied lands.

Velayati concluded that such measures and false portrayal of realities will not only fail to solve the problems in the Middle East, but will make them more complicated.

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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, France's de Charette Discuss Lebanon Situation

JN1804191996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat called for an immediate return to the 1993 cease-fire agreement in Lebanon and for continuing the French initiative.

President 'Arafat and French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette held a news conference after their meeting at the presidential office in Gaza this evening. President 'Arafat said the French efforts to halt the current incidents in Lebanon are good. 'Arafat also condemned the Israeli aggressions against the Lebanese people and Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

The president said he briefed de Charette on the conditions the Palestinian people are encountering due to the Israeli siege and the collective punishment. He praised the efforts of French President Jacques Chirac and the French people to foster the peace process on the Palestinian track and other tracks. He said that he supports an immediate end to the aggression against Lebanon and stressed that dialogue is the sole solution to maintain peace. He said that the Palestinian and Lebanese people are paying a dear price.

French Foreign Minister de Charette said that deliberations are under way at the Security Council to draw up a resolution. He reiterated his country's support and its efforts to ensure this resolution will gain unanimous approval. He said that the peace process is an inseparable whole. He added that he urged the EU to continue to provide aid to the Palestinian people. He said that the Palestinians have gone through extremely difficult phases and have faced many hardships. He indicated that his country will continue to support the National Authority and the Palestinian people. He thanked President 'Arafat and the National Authority for the warm reception. He said he was glad to visit Gaza and meet President 'Arafat.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat on Economic Situation, Events in Lebanon

JN1804165696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat expressed the hope that the Israeli siege of Palestinian territories will be lifted soon.

At a news conference with Shim'on Peres following their meeting near Bayt Hanun [Erez checkpoint], President 'Arafat described the Israeli steps on lifting the blockade as slow and stressed the need to find jobs for approximately 120,000 unemployed Palestinian workers. The president pointed out that the National Authority [NA] has started contacts with the World Bank and some friendly countries to find jobs for the Palestinian workers.

The president added: I hope that the economic situation, workers, and the movement of goods will be restored, particularly between Palestine and Egypt and Palestine and Jordan.

Regarding the events in Lebanon and the Israeli aggression against the Lebanese people and the Palestinian camps, President 'Arafat said: A month of dialogue serves the peace process more than an hour of confrontation. The president said he hopes that Arab and international efforts will emphasize a return to the 1993 agreement, something that was expressed by the Syrian foreign minister.

The president stressed that peace is important for Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Arab world, and the Middle East, not only for the Palestinians and the Israelis. President 'Arafat noted that the Palestine National Council will meet from 22 to 24 April.

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that the final status negotiations will begin on 4 May, as agreed. He pointed out that the Israeli Government will fulfill its commitments to what has been signed and agreed upon by the Palestinian and Israeli sides. He stressed the importance of joint cooperation to protect peace. Peres refused to blame Israel for the Lebanese situation, claiming that Israel has the right to defend its security.

The two sides agreed to form joint committees to follow up economic, political, and security issues, including the withdrawal from Hebron.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls On Arab, Islamic States To Confront Israel

TA1804162396 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 17 Apr 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, QUDS PRESS — Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] yesterday sharply condemned the position of the United States on the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. Hamas said that the United States firmly backs the Israeli military campaign, which has extended to most areas of Lebanon.

The official Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah said that the attack on Lebanon is part of the results of the

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Sharm al-Shaykh summit, which was held in Egypt in the middle of last month to combat the activities of groups opposed to the peace process. He added that the current Israeli expansion, which has reached Turkey, endangers the strategic security of all Arab and Islamic states.

Ghawshah called on Arab and Islamic governments to intervene politically and militarily to confront the Israeli war machine and support the resistance movements in Lebanon and Palestine. He praised the position of the Lebanese Government in the wake of the recent military campaign — a position which considered the Israeli occupation of part of Lebanon as the main cause for the tension in the region.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Za'nun Says PNC To Approve New Charter

TA1804153196 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 17 Apr 96 pp 1, 7

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-NAHAR office — Salim al-Za'nun, acting Palestine National Council [PNC] speaker, has affirmed that the call to convene the PNC's 21st session in Gaza on 22 April was made in response to a request by the PLO Executive Committee which the PNC speaker's office received on 11 April.

In an exclusive interview with AL-NAHAR, al-Za'nun explained that the PNC will be convened in Gaza provided all its members enter the homeland as citizens, adding that if the request of any of its members to return is rejected, the PNC will be convened elsewhere.

In answer to a question by AL-NAHAR, al-Za'nun said that in the event that some PNC members are unable to enter Gaza, the PNC will hold its session at the headquarters of the Arab League in which Palestine is a full member. [passage omitted]

Al-Za'nun added that the Palestinian National Charter will not be amended at the PNC's 21st session, slated to be held next week, because according to Article 33 of the charter it can only be amended at a special session agreed on by two-thirds of the PNC members, who number 669. This means that the approval of 446 members must be obtained to convene this special session. Hence, the charter can only be amended with the approval of two-thirds of the PNC members.

On the measures relating to amending the charter, al-Za'nun said that the PNC will not amend the charter but will draw up a new charter in which the changes that have taken place on the Palestinian problem's track since the declaration of independence in 1988 — from Oslo to the recent developments — will be taken into consideration.

He said that if the Israeli side insists that the charter be amended, the PNC will reject this demand because that is a great historical responsibility.

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Egypt

Egypt: Interior Ministry Issues Statement on Attack

NC1804130196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Statement issued by Egyptian Interior Ministry on 18 April—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Four gunmen riding in a white minibus early this morning opened fire randomly at a group of Greek tourists who were leaving the Europa Hotel in al-Haram Street, killing 18 persons, including 14 women and four men, and wounding others of Greek nationality. One of the wounded is Egyptian who guards the hotel's vehicles. The incident occurred when the tourists were about to leave their hotel in al-Jizah for Alexandria. The wounded were taken to al-Ahram Hospital for treatment.

The security forces are currently tracking the route used by the assailants, who managed to flee the scene of the incident, to arrest them. The competent prosecution office has been notified to begin an investigation.

Egypt: Dozens of Fundamentalists Arrested After Attack

NC1904114696 Paris AFP in English 1028 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 19 (AFP) — Dozens of Islamic fundamentalists have been arrested for questioning since gunmen cut down a Greek tour group outside a Cairo hotel, killing 18, a police source said Friday [19 April].

"Most of the arrests were made in the slum areas near the hotel where the attackers made their escape," close to the road leading to the al-Jiza Pyramids, the source said. "Those arrested are not militants but they are being interrogated by security services to check their links to the attack" on Thursday, he said.

Security was beefed up around hotels and at all exits from the country to prevent the escape of the four-man commando which sprayed the tourists with automatic weapons fire.

Around a dozen police officers responsible for security in the Pyramids Road area, the site of the attack, are being questioned and may face suspension, the source said. No policeman was present when the gunmen pulled up in a mini-van outside the Europa hotel on the pyramids' thoroughfare and opened fire on the tourists for several minutes before driving off.

The attack, which also left 14 Greeks and an Egyptian injured, brought to 1,008 the number killed since March 1992 when Moslem militants began their violent campaign against the government, according to an AFP count.

Ten of the injured Greeks returned to their country late Thursday along with the bodies of those killed.

Egypt: Police—Pyramid Gunmen 'Targeting' Israelis

NC1804150796 Paris AFP in English 1453 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 18 (AFP) — Police are investigating the possibility that gunmen who killed 18 Greek tourists at a hotel near the pyramids on Thursday may have been targeting Israelis, an interior ministry spokesman said.

"That is one of the tracks we are working on," Brigadier Mahmud al-Fishawi told AFP.

"We are examining all the possibilities and the idea that the attack could have been aiming at Israeli tourists is very possible considering the latest events" in Lebanon, al-Fishawi said.

He said up to 80 Israeli tourists were staying in the hotel at the time of the attack and pointed out that the Greek tour group targeted by the attackers had just arrived from the Jewish state.

Four gunmen mowed down the Greek tourists in a hail of gunfire outside a hotel near the pyramids early Thursday, killing 18 and wounding 15, in the worst massacre of foreigners in four years of violence in Egypt.

Egypt: Al-Sharif—Attack 'Desperate Attempt' by 'Terrorists'

NC1804190096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has emphasized that the terrorist incident that took place today was merely a desperate attempt on the part of terrorists to prove their existence after having sustained several successful blows over the past few years.

In remarks to our radio, al-Sharif stressed that the Egyptian people have affirmed their rejection of all types of extremism and terrorism. He emphasized that Egypt can always safeguard its stability. He pointed out that such incidents will not impede the march, renaissance, and accomplishments of the Egyptian people. He noted that incidents similar to what happened today to the Greek tourists, which was a regrettable incident, take place in several European countries.

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Egypt: Mubarak, Musa Send Condolences to Greek Government

NC1804152996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa expressed the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's condolences to the Greek Government and people over today's terrorist attack that he described as a mean crime committed by a number of criminals. He added that President Mubarak had sent a cable of condolences to the Greek president and prime minister. The foreign minister cabled his Greek counterpart today in which he affirmed the deep-rooted and close relations between the Greek and Egyptian peoples. He described the Greek and Egyptian victims of today's attacks as martyrs of terrorism.

Egypt: Mubarak Urges Clinton, Peres To End Fighting in Lebanon

NC1904052996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of Egypt's intensive efforts to contain the tense situation in Lebanon, President Husni Mubarak has sent messages to U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. The messages deal with the developments in Lebanon and the escalation of violence there. They stress the need for swift intervention to stop military operations against Lebanon and to calm the situation to save the peace process.

Egypt: U.S., Israeli Flags Burned in Rally Supporting Lebanon

NC1804144396 Cairo MENA in English 1415 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, April 18 — (MENA) — The Egyptian committee in support of the Lebanese people held a popular rally last night at the premises of the Labor Party. It was attended by leaders and representatives of opposition parties.

Speakers denounced Israeli aggressions on the Lebanese people. A one-minute silence was observed in mourning of the martyrs of Israel's random shelling of South Lebanon. Some of those attending the rally burned the American and Israeli flags to show their denunciation of U.S. support to Israeli aggressions.

Egypt: Musa Demands Halt to Israel's Attack on Lebanese Civilians

NC1804142996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1412 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Apr (MENA) — Egypt has condemned Israel's strikes against Lebanese civilians. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has affirmed that the murder of 50 civilians in a single village, Qana, provides proof of the extent of the situation. It also proves that the use of violence and strikes against civilians in this manner go beyond any legal system and constitute a violation of international law and human law. The foreign minister called for a halt of the attacks on civilians in Lebanon.

Israel attacked the Fijian contingent of the UN troops in Lebanon, which is based on Qana, with rockets and bombs while Lebanese civilians from the village were taking refuge at the contingent's headquarters to escape Israel's continued raids against them. The massacre killed or wounded more than 150 persons, mostly women, children, and elderly people.

Egypt: Saudi Foreign Minister, Musa Make Statement on Lebanon

NC1804122696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1128 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Apr (MENA)— President Husni Mubarak today received a message from the custodian of the two holy mosques, Saudi Monarch King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, within the framework of the ongoing consultations between the two countries. This took place when President Mubarak received Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal.

Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal stated that during the meeting, they reviewed the results of yesterday's Arab League Council meeting. He expressed satisfaction with the resolutions the Council issued. The Saudi foreign minister expressed his hopes that the opportunity will be given for diplomatic contacts to find an immediate solution for stopping the fighting in southern Lebanon and arrange things in such a way that the empty cycle of conflict is annihilated, while preserving the independence, sovereignty, and peace of the Lebanese territories, as well as the unity of its territory.

He affirmed that this will only happen, first and foremost, when Security Council Resolution 425 is implemented. It is the ideal solution for confronting any violence in the region, so that peace efforts can continue.

He said that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are always trying to find a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis, so that these efforts can continue, become fruitful, and realize their goals.

Answering a question on whether there were any efforts to convene an Arab summit, Sa'ud al-Faysal said: In fact, we did not discuss the subject this morning. If the circumstances for convening such a summit are opportune, then we will hold this summit, particularly since all sides are trying to unite the Arab ranks. This

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is what we are all aspiring for. If circumstances are right, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will not tarry in this regard. Egypt will also not tarry.

Answering another question on the five-way meeting yesterday with the French foreign minister, he said the French foreign minister is visiting Israel today and we have no information on the results of his contacts there.

He expressed his hopes that these efforts will be crowned by success in a way that entrenches a balanced peace for all sides. He added that the results of diplomatic contacts should proceed first and foremost from the basis of returning Lebanese territories to Lebanon and equal security for all.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa touched on efforts exerted within the Security Council regarding the compensation Lebanon is demanding for the destruction that has taken place there. He said all these matters can be decided through Security Council resolutions, noting that Lebanon will propose this matter to the Security Council. As an Arab member of the Security Council, we support Lebanon on this matter, Musa said.

Musa added: But this proposal has not yet been discussed by the Security Council, because there is opposition to presenting the matter to them. There is also much discussion regarding the form and shape of the resolution.

'Amr Musa clarified that Egypt is holding contacts with Arab countries and all other parties. Yesterday, a meeting was held with the French foreign minister, and the U.S. secretary of state was contacted.

He said that the final word on this matter is Lebanon's, together with Syria. We will accept what they accept, on the basis that this matter will be terminated because the Israeli military attacks, or any other attacks, cannot go on.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Speaks on Lebanon Bombing, U.S. Policy

LD1804190496 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tripoli, 18 Apr (JANA) — The brother leader of the revolution [Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] has stressed that the savage attack which the Israeli enemy is currently waging on Lebanon is the first result of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, and that the attack is an implementation of the conference's resolutions.

This came in an international news conference held by the brother leader of the revolution yesterday, which was attended by a large number of correspondents from international news agencies, broadcasting stations, satellite television networks, and newspapers and magazines from all over the world.

The brother leader of the revolution added that it is not only the Israelis who are responsible for the killing of children, the destruction of houses while families were still inside, and the destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure, but also all those who attended the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, because what is happening now was decided at the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. [passage omitted]

Al-Qadhdhafi stressed that terrorism is the main basis of U.S. foreign policy.

He emphasized at the news conference that U.S. falsehoods and allegations regarding what it called Libya's determination to establish a chemical plant are nothing but the exercise of terrorism against Libya. [passage omitted]

The brother leader of the revolution went on to say that we will not allow the so-called Lockerbie issue to be discussed before the world has its say and makes a decision on the massacre perpetrated against the Libyan Arab people by America in 1986.

He said that America should be ashamed of talking about Libya after that massacre, and that it should lower its head before Libya forever because it has perpetrated an historic crime against its children. [passage omitted]

Al-Qadhdhafi showed the large number of correspondents from news agencies, broadcasting stations, satellite television networks, newspapers, and magazines from all over the world a map showing the course of the pipes of the Great Man-Made River, and pointed out on the map the course of the second phase, and where it divides into two branches in the Tarhunah region. He stated that a mountain in Tarhunah was in the way of the course of the pipeline at the confluence of the two branches, which forced us to dig a tunnel through the mountain so that the pipes would be laid through the mountain on their course to Tripoli.

He said that the first and second phases of the Great Man-Made River project are being built by Korean companies which are familiar with the river, in accordance with the contract signed with them. He said that these companies have all the maps relating to the project and they are well aware that what America is saying is not true. The brother leader of the revolution added that that tunnel is the one that America is referring to and claiming is a chemical weapons factory.

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This is a lie, he said, and the journalists who accompanied the Nigerian president during his visit to the project had seen that. [passage omitted]

He said: The Israelis have plants for nuclear bombs, chemical weapons, and bacteriological weapons. Why does America not attack the Dimona reactor? Why does it not protest against the Israelis who are manufacturing bacteriological and chemical weapons? It is sheer tyranny. It is open tyranny. It is racism. [passage omitted]

Answering a question on the right of Arabs to possess weapons similar to those possessed by the Israeli enemy, the brother leader of the revolution stressed that the Arabs have the legal right to possess the weapon that will create a balance with the Israelis.

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi Thanks Egyptian Press for Standing Up to U.S.

NC1704210396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1950 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 17 Apr (MENA)—Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, has praised the Egyptian press and media, thanking them for heroically standing up to the unjust U.S. campaign against Libya. He said this is not strange on the part of Egypt and its people. He described Egypt as the throbbing heart of the Arab nation. He added that this pan-Arab stance is revolutionary and in defense of justice.

At a meeting today with Egyptian and Cairo-based foreign journalists stationed in Cairo who arrived from Cairo the day before yesterday [15 April] to cover the 10th anniversary of the U.S. air raids on Libya, al-Qadhdhafi said the issue of the Libyan plane that took off for Jeddah yesterday "is a very ordinary one" [mas'alah 'adiyah jiddan] and the issue of the Libyans going to pilgrimage on their own planes is closed [mas'alah muntahiyah] and no one must protest against it.

The brother colonel denounced the U.S. and British imperialist stance of always accusing Libya. Regarding the chemical weapons plant, the colonel said his country is prepared to refute this accusation but on Libya's terms and with prior understanding.

As regards how long Libya can tolerate the embargo, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi said the embargo will continue as long as the United States remains arrogant. However, he expressed the belief that the United States will not remain the policeman of the world forever. He expressed the hope that the Mediterranean will be a sea of cooperation between its northern and southern parts.

Libya: Unity Committee, JANA Editor Condemn 'Ugly Massacre'

LD1804231396 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The secretariat of the General People's Committee for Unity has issued a statement on the escalation of the unjust Israeli aggression on Lebanon, where the Israeli enemy today committed an ugly massacre in Qana in southern Lebanon. The statement said:

Every day the Israeli enemy demonstrates its belittlement and insult of everything Arab and persists in committing the ugliest of crimes that humanity could witness. The Arab nation pays with its dignity and rights for the treason and recklessness of the traitors, the wimps, and the signatories of the agreements of subservience and shame who call themselves peacemakers. In reality they are causing the destruction of their nation and their peoples with their own hands.

The Israeli aggression on Lebanon today entered a new phase and took on another dimension with the mass slaughter and graveyards, which the land of Lebanon has become too narrow to accommodate. Meanwhile the Israelis and their allies are determined to depict the Arab governments as cowards, fleeing in the face of the advance, and contenting themselves with watching the sons of this great nation confront the enemy unarmed, proving that its will to live will not perish.

The level to which the Israelis have sunk means that it has become impossible to deal with them in formal meetings and statements which denounce and condemn. It is now inevitable that the practical responsibilities prescribed by the Arab conventions, particularly the joint Arab defence pact, be carried out, that any dealings or contacts with the enemy be immediately abandoned, and that the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, which provided the enemy with an opportunity to carry out its current aggression against Lebanon and tighten its grip on usurped Palestine, be canceled.

The call for the holding of an urgent and immediate Arab summit in accordance with the brother leader's call, which the Arab League secretary general has praised, is the only opportunity to adopt an honorable stance and take practical steps to preserve what is left of the Arab nation's dignity, and to ensure that the world respects the blood of our honorable martyrs and that our existence is safeguarded.

JANA's Arab affairs editor commented on this terrorist massacre as follows:

Once more the world has witnessed one of the ugliest massacres committed by the invading Israelis which,

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as usual, has targeted innocent unarmed civilians, including Arab infants, children, old people, and women. [passage omitted]

The editor asked: Is there terrorism after this? Is there anything that could be described as brutal, barbaric, and savage after this massacre committed by the Israelis against unarmed innocent people from among the sons of the Lebanese Arab people, with flagrant American military and political support? [passage omitted]

The editor concluded his comment by saying: What value and what credibility will there be after today for all those whose prattling about human rights and the so-called combating of terrorism have not stopped? They are headed by America, which turns the world upside down for the killing of a few Israeli occupiers and orders the holding of summits and the issuance of prepared resolutions and statements for them and then does not hesitate to fabricate flagrant excuses when it is a question of massacres and carnage, the victims of which are hundreds of Arab infants, children, women, and old people. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Morocco: French Senators Praise King's International Role

LD1804141296 Rabat MAP in English 1255 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, Apr. 18 (MAP) — Several French senators have hailed the moderating role King Hassan II of Morocco has been playing on the international arena and lauded his action in favor of peace promotion and rapprochement between peoples.

The senators who were guests to a luncheon hosted Wednesday [17 April] by the Moroccan ambassador in Paris, Mohammed Berrada, welcomed the coming visit the sovereign is to pay to France next May 7 and voiced attachment to French-Moroccan friendship.

The royal visit will undoubtedly constitute "a great and outstanding event in relations between the two countries" and will consolidate "rapprochement between Morocco and the European Union", said Senator Paulette Brisepierre.

The French senator voiced appreciation for the projected setting up of a bicameral parliament in Morocco saying this would enable the French senators to jointly endeavor with their future Moroccan peers for the consolidation of bilateral relations.

Speaker of the Moroccan parliament, Jalal Essaid, who attended the luncheon, stressed the importance of parliamentary cooperation as a rapprochement tool and called for the consolidation of inter-parliamentary dialogue. He recalled in this respect that the Moroccan parliament has set up a commission in charge of relations with the European parliament and parliaments of the members of the European Union to institute political dialogue in the frame of the new partnership accords between Morocco and Europe.

These moves are meant to straighten up the distorted image that does not reflect Moroccan reality, he said pointing out that Morocco made noteworthy strides in matters of democracy and human rights.

Jalal Essaid also drew the French senators' attention to the obstacles erected by the Algerian-backed guerrilla movement "The Polisario" [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] to hamper the implementation of the UN settlement plan on the Western Sahara, formerly under Spanish rule and retrieved by Morocco in 1975 under the Madrid Accords.

The UN plan provides for the organization of a referendum to determine the future of the territory. The plan is now stalled because of divergence between Morocco and the "Polisario" on the number of eligible voters in the projected referendum.

Morocco: National Committee for Nuclear Safety Holds Meeting

LD1804201596 Casablanca AL-SAHARA AL-MAGHRIBIYAH in Arabic 13 Apr 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The National Committee for Nuclear Safety held its first meeting recently at the headquarters of the the Ministry of Energy and Mines. The committee, which was established by the Ministry of Energy and Mines on 7 December 1994, consists of a number of figures who are well-known for their scientific and technological competence and were appointed by the prime minister. It also includes representatives appointed by the main ministries concerned (the Ministries of Interior, Public Health, Higher Education, Transport, Agriculture, Energy, Environment, National Defence as well as the National Center for Energy, Sciences and Nuclear Technologies).

This committee, which is chaired by Abdelhamid Mekki Berrada, is a consultation commission on views and recommendations regarding issues related to nuclear installations. [passage omitted]

Furthermore, the committee studied a working program for the period between April to December [1996] which focused on organizing seminars on nuclear safety in industrialized countries, radiation protection systems, licencing, and monitoring of nuclear installations. The committee also discussed organizing a workshop to

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brief the audience on the work of the national center for energy, sciences and nuclear technologies, and the building of a center for nuclear studies in Memoura.

Furthermore, a course will be organized to study and discuss the preliminary report on safety at the center for nuclear studies. Technical visits will be organized to the center for nuclear studies at the National Institute of Oncology, laboratories of the National Institute of Agricultural Research, and the National Institute of Radiation Protection.

Morocco: Internet Providers Require Official Licence

LD1804214396 Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI in Arabic 6 Apr 96 p 2

["Private Companies Market the Internet in Morocco Under the Control of the National Bureau of Post and Transport"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Internet is being marketed in Morocco under the control of the National Bureau of Post and Transport which grants licences to private companies called Internet providers. Each of these companies must obtain a book of undertaking [daftar tahammulat] and a licence from the National Bureau of Post and Transport prior to marketing the Internet services according to rates open for competition. Internet marketing was the topic of a working dinner banquet on "The Internet: What horizons" organized last weekend in Casablanca by the national society of transport engineers. Many engineers representing public sector establishments (especially the national bureau of post and transport and Ministry of Marine Fisheries and Merchant Marine and Royal Maroc airlines) and representatives of several private companies took part. [passage omitted]

Participants pointed out that thanks to the Internet private and public entrepreneurs can obtain and exchange information which will improve their productivity and facilitate their communications with the entire world.

Morocco: Daily Views Implications of Second Television Channel

LD1804205396 Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI in Arabic 13 Apr 96 p 1

["From One Day to Another"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A number of newspapers have reported that it has become certain that the state will run the second television channel, following a series of difficult negotiations.

The news raises both relief and concern. Relief because the government has abandoned some of its liberal convictions: After stressing the need for a return to economic planning, it is now planning to carry out some kind of nationalization [as published], which indicates that the privatization which it has championed and recklessly rushed into, declaring it as an irreversible choice, has become reversible and something that needed to be reconsidered. It [the government] is at least acknowledging the opposition's call for prudence and discernment, and for the institutions which are of strategic importance to the economy and the society to be identified. [passage omitted]

Tunisia

Tunisia: Foreign Ministry Condemns Israeli Shelling of Lebanon

LD1904102996 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tunisian Foreign Ministry has issued the following statement:

Tunisia strongly condemns the indiscriminate shelling carried out by Israel against unarmed civilians in Lebanon, especially the ugly operation carried out by its forces against the village of Qana near the city of Tyre, which has resulted in a great number of innocent victims.

Tunisia, while once again expressing its total solidarity with fraternal Lebanon, calls for an immediate halt to these repeated attacks by Israeli forces against Lebanon's territory, which constitute a blatant violation of international laws and norms. Tunisia also appeals to all peaceloving forces to firmly intervene to put an end to such massacres in order to spare the blood of the innocent and to preserve the sovereignty of Lebanon.

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Kuwait

Kuwait: Foreign Minister on Ties With Jordan, PA

JN1904071696 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 15-21 Apr 96 pp 12-13

[Interview with Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, by unidentified correspondent in Kuwait; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] The normalization of relations between Kuwait and Jordan was at the center of controversy in the last National Assembly session. Some deputies spoke about fears that the Jordanians and Palestinians who left Kuwait during and after the liberation will return. You met with Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti on the sidelines of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. Are there really reciprocal conditions for full normalization between the two countries?

[Al-Sabah] First of all, relations with Jordan have not been severed. We still have an embassy in Amman, headed by a charge d'affairs. Moreover, my meetings with my brother al-Kabariti in Sharm al-Shaykh and Cairo are beyond question. I met with a kind brother. I found nothing embarrassing about meeting with him. Regarding the conditions, I would like to refer to his highness the amir's inaugural speech at the National Assembly. The amir specified the limits that certain countries must observe before Kuwait can restore its relations with them. These limits include demanding that Iraq implement the Security Council resolutions and return the POW's, both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. Jordan went beyond these limits. It is trying to change the situation in Iraq. It has far exceeded these limits. I would like to emphasize that relations with Jordan will be restored soon, God willing. There will be a Jordanian presence at their embassy in Kuwait soon.

I would like to assert that there are no Jordanian conditions regarding any persons or issues. Some rumors were spread in the country that 300,000 Palestinians will return to Kuwait. We regret these rumors. Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians, or Syrians come to Kuwait according to work contracts or visit visas. They are all equal.

[Correspondent] Did Kuwait ask Jordan to prove that it is practically involved in a plan to topple the Iraqi regime?

[Al-Sabah] Never. Jordan went beyond what we asked for. We called on all parties to ask Iraq to implement the Security Council resolutions and return the POW's. Jordan went beyond that, without a hint from Kuwait. It is a Jordanian conviction. I would like us to distance ourselves from this issue. We asked for only those things that I mentioned.

[Correspondent] Will there be similar political moves toward the Palestinian Authority [PA], especially since Kuwait is one of the countries that granted funds to it?

[Al-Sabah] We support the Palestinian people — they are our people. We extended $25 million in support to them. However, we stipulated certain conditions. We said that the World Bank should take care of spending this amount on certain projects, like building schools and hospitals. The amount was spent in full. Some have asked Kuwait to give additional funds. The Kuwaiti Government is considering this issue, and we will see what we can give in the future.

[Correspondent] Does this mean that there are no political Kuwaiti contacts with the PA?

[Al-Sabah] No, there are no contacts with the PA. So as not to conceal anything, I will tell you that there are two feast congratulations cards sent by the brothers in the PA.

[Correspondent] Why? Are there any specific Kuwaiti conditions? Are you waiting for certain Palestinian stands?

[Al-Sabah] I believe that the Palestinians offended Kuwait a great deal. I do not believe that there is another country as small as Kuwait that hosted more Palestinians. They were not refugees. Refugees are imposed on you. I want to emphasize that they harmed Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation. I also would like to say that no one forced them to leave the country. They left during the occupation, after they offended Kuwait through thefts and other actions. After liberation, Kuwait only deported a few hundreds of them. We have more than 50,000 honest Palestinians living with their kinsfolk and brothers.

[Correspondent] What is the latest on the contacts with Yemen? Are there any steps toward normalization, taking into consideration that you recently intervened to explain what Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih said about Kuwait in his interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-WATAN?

[Al-Sabah] All these steps will be taken in succession. We are not in a hurry. As I said, our diplomatic ties with Yemen were not severed, and there is a Kuwaiti embassy in Sanaa. Relations do exist.

[Correspondent] But your explanation of the Yemeni president's interview was striking and attracted attention.

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[Al-Sabah] We always try not to provoke others. However, some journalists, regrettably, try to provoke the interviewee to make him say something that will make the interview hostile.

[Correspondent] During the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, did Egypt ask Kuwait to take steps to stop some societies' donations to extremist fundamentalist movements?

[Al-Sabah] I would like to emphasize that we do not have institutions that pay terrorists. What we have are private societies that help poor families and build schools and hospitals. They do not pay killers and terrorists. It is disgraceful to say such a thing, and I do not even want to hear it.

[Correspondent] But the Egyptian authorities prevented deputy Mubarak al-Duwaylah from entering Egypt?

[Al-Sabah] There was a computer error (the newspaper AL-QABAS quoted an Egyptian source as saying that the mistake was in the name — the name of the person in question was Mubarak al-Duwayqah, not al-Duwaylah). As you know, all officials in charge of these welfare societies accompanied me during my visit to Egypt. President Husni Mubarak received them and was very nice to them. He even said he hoped that all other institutions would be like the Kuwaiti ones.

[Correspondent] In light of the visits Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by to the Sultanate of Oman and Qatar, do you feel the absence of a unified Gulf policy on a Middle East settlement and other issues? Does such a visit put pressure on other countries in the region?

[Al-Sabah] This is not the first time Peres has made such a visit, which pressures no one. We will not accept any pressure. We will not accept the visit of any Israeli official to Kuwait. However, I do not want to lodge a protest with our brothers in Oman or Qatar. They are free to pursue the policy they deem fit, but this policy has nothing to do with the Gulf Cooperation Council or with Gulf security, for that matter. Consequently, please do not use the word pressure. We have been hostile to Israel for one reason: the enmity it harbors toward our Arab brothers. In addition, we have no borders with Israel. When Israel settles its problems with all its Arab neighbors, particularly Syria and Lebanon, we will have no quarrel with it. Things will be normal.

[Correspondent] What are your predictions about developments in Bahrain? What collective measure can Kuwait and other Gulf states take to address the situation there?

[Al-Sabah] What is happening in Bahrain hurts us. We are not accustomed to terrorism and the reckless acts that are taking place there. We trust our kinsfolk in Bahrain. We trust the wisdom of the Bahraini people and that of His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman and the ruling family. We trust that the problem there will be settled soon, God willing.

[Correspondent] What are the political implications of the Kuwaiti amir's visit to the United States and of the upcoming Arab visits by the heir apparent?

[Al-Sabah] The visit by his highness the amir to the United States, which was made at the invitation of President Bill Clinton, had no political implications. You are well aware that our ties with the United States are good and uninterrupted. As for the heir apparent, he received more than 50 invitations to make foreign visits. He wanted Egypt to be the first leg of his foreign tour, but the visit was postponed due to family circumstances; specifically, the death of a family member. As a result, he will visit Morocco. Other foreign visits, including a visit to Egypt, will be decided later.

[Correspondent] Is there anything new on the Kuwaiti POW's in Iraq?

[Al-Sabah] We hope for something new in this regard. We want to know whether they are dead or alive. It is our strong hope that they are alive, God willing.

Kuwait: Government To Grant Nationality to 100 'Stateless' Persons

JN1904112296 Kuwait KUWAIT TIMES in English 11 Apr 96 pp 1, 4

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Kuwait: Minister of Interior Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah, revealing that he would meet with parliamentarians on the National Assembly's Committee of Interior and Defence Affairs on a monthly basis to acquaint them with the latest procedural measures regarding the settlement of the stateless problem, announced yesterday that 100 biduns [stateless persons] will be granted Kuwaiti nationality and that the relevant decree will be published in the official gazette in a few days.

He told journalists after a meeting with the committee that invitations to attend the meeting had been sent to all deputies who tabled proposals about solving the bidun problem. Shaykh 'Ali said various aspects were discussed at the meeting and those present were convinced that the government must solve the problem without issuing a law.

"We are not in need of a new legislation in as much as we are in need of implementation of a carefully studied

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plan," the minister said. He suggested that the committee meet weekly and that the Interior Minister be invited, ever thought a week would be a very short period for progress and agreed to meet on a monthly basis.

About the 100 biduns, Shaykh 'Ali said the actual number is much more and they were signed during the first meeting of the committee, adding that it includes men and women. [passage omitted]

Kuwait: Physicians Leave for Lebanon

LD1804173996 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1625 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 18 Apr — A team of Kuwaiti doctors has left for Lebanon today to help the Lebanese people who are victims of the Israeli aggression which has entered its seventh day. Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Muhaylan, the health minister, told the Kuwaiti news agency that the help given to the devastated Lebanese people by a team of Kuwaiti doctors was the result of cooperation between the medical authorities of the two countries. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Attempt To Smuggle Explosives Foiled at Border

LD1804131396 Riyadh SPA in English 1235 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, April 18, SPA — The officials at Al-Haditha customs checkpoint have foiled an attempt to smuggle a quantity of explosives to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A responsible source at the Ministry of Interior told SAUDI PRESS AGENCY last night: 'The explosives had been hidden in different secret places of a Caprice car, carrying a Saudi plate. The car was driven by a lone Saudi person, coming from outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at 0315 hours early morning of Friday, 10th of Dhul al-Qida,1416 h corresponding to 29th March, 1996.'

'Following a check-up of the captured material, it was found by experts that the amount of the explosives could be around 38 kilograms and that it also contained 116 meters of match-cords which were filled with explosives understood to be of C-4 kind, the other of Semtex kind and the third of Tetryl kind. All these materials are highly explosive and has big and effective strength when used,' the source added.

The source said the captured material, the person and the car were handed over to the concerned security investigation body. Following this, the source said 'other persons were also arrested later on as it was clear from investigations that they had link with these explosives.'

'It has been proved that the car had been laden with these explosives in Lebanon with arrangement and knowledge of the arrested parties,' the source said.

He added that investigations are still in progress with them.

The source said there are television tapes which show the car which had the smuggled explosives and the explosives exposed after the discovery.

Saudi Arabia: Detainees Seen Linked to Earlier Riyadh Explosion

MM1904110096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Apr 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salman Nimr: "Detainees Linked to Riyadh Explosion?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh — Diplomatic sources in Riyadh believe that the people behind the foiled attempt to smuggle 38 kg of explosives into Saudi territory might be linked to the explosion that occurred in Riyadh over five months ago and which left eight people dead and 60 wounded. However, Saudi official circles have not confirmed that. They just said that "investigations are continuing and we do not want to anticipate them." Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz is expected to reveal some information about the issue during his annual news conference scheduled to be held in holy Mecca tomorrow.

Saudi official circles have expressed their satisfaction at the success of customs and security personnel in seizing the explosives before they could be smuggled into the kingdom with a possible view to an explosion or series of explosions being staged during the pilgrimage season, during which some 2 million Muslims from all over the world gather. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Riyadh Sends Relief Assistance to Lebanon

LD1804143796 Riyadh SPA in English 1318 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, April 18, SPA — Within the framework of directives of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, a cargo plane of Saudia, the national airline, left today King Khaled International Airport for Lebanon, carrying urgent relief assistance for the victims of the Israeli aggression on it.

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The relief consignment includes foodstuffs, cloth-made spread-sheets, tents, carpets, blankets, medicine and two ambulances.

The relief aid is part of the kingdom's pioneering role undertaken by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz to serve Islam and Moslems and dispatch them urgent support and assistances in times of emergencies and catastrophies.

Yemen

Yemen: Deputy Premier Denies Plans for Military Action Over Island

NC1904105296 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 19 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Ansi in Sanaa by 'Adil 'Abd-al-Tawwab in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] ['Abd-al-Tawwab] Mr. 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Ansi, welcome to the program.

[Al-Ansi] Thank you.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Have their been any results so far in the mediation efforts to solve the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea?

[Al-Ansi] Yemen's position continues to be the same. Eritrea's intransigence is hindering mediations efforts, the latest being the French mediation [words indistinct]. Yemen announced its acceptance of the results achieved by the French mediation.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] So, Erirea has so far not announced its position on the French mediation or on the declaration of principles offered by the French mediator?

[Al-Ansi] It has not announced its position so far. We are waiting to see what France and the United States are going to do if Eritrea continues its procrastination or rejects the mediation. [passage omitted]

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Mr. al-Ansi, according to some press reports, Yemen intends to take military action to recapture the al-Hanish island. Is this true?

[Al-Ansi] This is not true. Perhaps the Eritreans and their supporters have a role in disseminating such reports, with a view to provoking the responsible Yemeni position. We realize that such reports seek to justify Eritrea's procrastination. Perhaps Eritrea has other objectives, but all these reports are untrue. The policy Yemen pursued from the beginning has not changed. Yemen will direct all its efforts toward a peaceful solution. We have great hopes that we will not be forced to change this policy. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Oil-for-Food Talks To Resume 19 Apr

JN1904092096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0820 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 19 Apr (INA)—Delegations from Iraq and the United Nations will this evening, Baghdad time, hold another working session within the framework of the technical dialogue on the issue of oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs. On Thursday [18 April], the two delegations held a working session that focused on reviewing the technical aspects related to the subject.

Iraq: Tariq 'Aziz Receives UN Special Commission Chairman

JN1904112096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1105 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 19 Apr (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz received Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission, and his delegation today. The meeting was attended by the ministers of foreign affairs and oil and a number of experts.

Iraq: Health Minister Meets Jordanian Official

96LH0165F Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Hana' 'Abd-al-Zahrah: "Minister of Health Meets Head of the Amman Chamber of Commerce and Industry"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Khaldun Abu-Hisan, president of the Amman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, expressed the solidarity of the Jordanian people with the Iraqi people, as well as his optimism regarding the termination of the unjust blockade imposed upon them for more than five years. He made these statements during his meeting with Minister of Health Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak, and indicated that his visit, and that of the delegation accompanying him, was an expression of brotherly continuity between the two peoples and their joint efforts in various fields.

Iraq: Health Ministry Reduces Hospital Fees

96LH0165B Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Hana' 'Abd-al-Zahrah: "Fees for Treatment Services in Governmental Hospitals Reduced 50 Percent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Health has decided to lower fees for its emergency services in governmental hospitals by 50 percent. An official source in the Ministry told AL-JUMHURIYAH that fees for operations and medical services performed in private rooms and wards in governmental hospitals are 1,000 Iraqi dinars [D] for minor operations, D3,000 for operations of moderate complexity, and D6,000 for major operations. He added that new fees have been issued for new services. Treatment in private wings of hospitals for radiation and nuclear medicine is D600 for each radical treatment and D400 for a moderate treatment. Fees for maternity rooms are D1,000, while the fee for a child's nurse for one day is D300. He explained that fees for simple laboratory analyses are D100 and D200 for complex laboratory analyses. He said that fees for x-ray examinations are D200 for chest, head, and nasal sinuses for one film and D1,000 for stomach, eye test with barium, and gall bladder.

Iraq: Drop in Prices of Herbicides Reported

96LH0165A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Rawiyah Hashim: "Reduction in Prices of Agricultural Herbicides"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Agriculture has promised a 50 to 60 percent reduction in prices of herbicides and preventative services that the Public Organization for Crop Protection offers to farmers and fellahin. This was announced by the Organization's director general, Dr. Qaysi Kazim Zuwayn, who said that the reduction, which was implemented in accordance with President Saddam Husayn's letter of 2 December 1995, included prices of field herbicides and [al-Afat], which afflicts fields and gardens, and herbicides used to combat defects in wheat and barley crops.

He pointed out that the price reduction also included services offered to farmers and fellahin, including leasing of agricultural aircraft, quarantine and preparatory processes, etc.

Iraq: Drop in Transportation Prices Reported

96LH0165C Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Farid Hasan: "Transportation Fares in Ninawa Reduced 40 Percent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Private Transportation Board in Ninawa has decided to lower transportation fees on internal lines by 40 percent. The Board's director, 'Abd-al-Mu'ayn Muhammad al-Rumi, stated that the fare has been set at 15 Iraqi dinars [D] instead of D25, and that the control offices would diligently pursue violations among drivers and would adopt the necessary measures with regard to them. Moreover, cashier offices in al-Rafidayn and al-Rashid in the

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governorate have been provided with large amounts of currency of small denomination.

Iraq: Plan To Meet Farmers' Petroleum Product Needs Completed

96LH0165D Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 4

[Article: "Supply of Fuel, Oils for Winter Agricultural Use"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The branch office of the Public Organization for Petroleum Products in the northern region has completed a plan aimed at supplying the fuel, lubricants, grease and gas oil requirements for farmers and fellahin to use in the winter agricultural season in Ninawa governorate. Muhammad al-Karm, chief of the northern area branch, told AL-JUMHURIYAH that the organization has supplied more than 7,00 additional allotments of lubricants for agricultural trucks, 69 tons of grease, and 568,000 liters of oil. He added that these allotments have been distributed in accordance with technical regulations applied in cooperation with the departments concerned, through the central agricultural use committee.

Iraq: Report on Cement Products Distribution

96LH0165E Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Bashari al-Hamdani: "Initiative To Market Concrete Products"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The concrete products factory in Abu Gharib, which is subordinate to the Public Organization for Implementation of Transportation and Communications Projects has, for the first time, begun to produce and market its products for both the Socialist and private sectors, in accordance with demand. An official source in the organization stated that the products include concrete poles for fencing, flower basins, outdoor benches, and concrete light poles. This is in addition to unloading and transporting cement and factory equipment to departments in the Socialist sector.

The source added that the organization has initiated a process to exempt duties and fees from engineering designs and specifications, which it prepares for ministries and other state offices. Certain paid for projects will be implemented soon on behalf of certain companies and institutions.

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Israel: IDF, Peres, Baraq on al-Nabatiyah Attack

TA1804125196 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In an initial reaction to the Israeli Air Force attack on al-Nabatiyah in which, according to a report emanating from Lebanon, 11 civilians were killed, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] said that the reference was to the house of a Hizballah activist to which a terrorist squad had fled.

In reaction to the attack, Peres said that the IDF does not attack houses for no reason. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq expressed regret about the al-Nabatiyah incident.

Israel: IDF Spokesman Explains al-Nabatiyah Firing

TA1804134996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At least nine people were killed in the air force raid on al-Nabatiyah, including six children. There were 10 wounded.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman explained that the planes fired at a Hizballah activist's house on the outskirts of the town, to which Hizballah terrorists had fled after a morning attack on an IDF position on the 'Ali al-Tahir Ridge in the central sector of the security zone.

Furthermore, the planes came under antiaircraft fire from the vicinity of the house. The spokesman recalled that, since the beginning of Operation Grapes of Wrath, the IDF has been warning the residents of al-Nabatiyah to evacuate their house in order to avoid harm. He added that the IDF call is even more valid in view of the fact that Hizballah continues to use civilian houses for hiding and for firing at Galilee towns and our troops.

Israel: Baraq Explains IDF Tanks in Lebanon, Casualties

TA1804152196 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1400 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, in a makeshift studio in Qiryat Shemona, by Dan Margalit in the Tel Aviv studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Margalit] Good afternoon, Mr. Minister. This is a hard day for us, and I assume you will be the address for the many complaints, reactions, and protests from the whole world. What is Israel saying about these events, which it did not intend, but the brunt of which it — and you — will have to bear?

[Baraq] I am sure that, along with everyone, we sincerely regret any injury to civilians. I have been acquainted with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] commanders and soldiers for many years, and I am convinced that none of them planned to inflict the kind of injury we witnessed today — definitely not on UN facilities or civilians. I am not familiar with the details, and therefore I cannot explain what exactly happened there. I assume that in both cases [air force raids on al-Nabatiyah and the village of Qana], it was an attempt to react to firing on IDF personnel, although some mishap of which I am unaware at this point may have played a part. I do not have the details, and we will know more only after it is checked by the army.

[Margalit] Will these developments bring on a change in the operation's pace, objectives, and scope?

[Baraq] I assume we will have to reassess the situation tonight, as we do every night. I think the operation will go on. We had far-reaching and very important objectives when we launched this operation: to guarantee permanently that no katyushas are fired at the Galilee. Therefore, as much pain as we feel at the injury to innocent civilians, we cannot overlook the responsibility of Hizballah, which forced us to launch this operation, and of the Lebanese Government which for a long time avoided taking the necessary action to stop the Hizballah activities from its territory.

[Margalit] Minister Baraq, is it true that the IDF has sent land troops into Lebanon?

[Baraq] You have seen the pictures. As they say, one picture is worth a thousand words. You saw our tanks entering south Lebanon, although it does not mean they will act.

[Margalit] Is it a threat, or the start of a military operation?

[Baraq] As Israel's operational branch, the IDF is prepared for any eventuality.

[Margalit] In view of the developments over the past 24 hours, most of which were either out of our control or the result of bad luck, would you not say it is a pity we rejected the French initiative for mediation between us, the Syrians, and the Lebanese, and between us and Hizballah through them?

[Baraq] We did not reject either the French or U.S. initiatives. As far as we are concerned, this operation could end after 24 hours, if the result were no more katyushas at the Galilee, and if it allowed the IDF to act effectively against Hizballah.

[Margalit] And yet France has announced that French Foreign Minister de Charette had a very difficult conversation with you.

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[Baraq] Ah, well, some situations create uneasy conversations. By the way, I do not think it was difficult. I have known de Charette since I became foreign minister, I respect him very much, and I discuss things candidly with him.

[Margalit] Then what was your disagreement with him?

[Baraq] I cannot share the details of that conversation with the media. In substance, we are in favor of examining every prospect for stopping the firing of katyushas at the Galilee, provided they stop for good, and not for 24 or 36 hours. We think the American drift is correct, and besides, they started their activities earlier. We advised the French to coordinate positions with the Americans. In general, however, we take a positive view of any initiative that can contribute to a cease-fire.

[Margalit] Which means that we prefer American mediation. But it seems to be unproductive: The Syrians are going along as if they did not care, and we have meanwhile inadvertently entangled ourselves in a situation which may mark the beginning of general disappointment in Operation Grapes of Wrath.

[Baraq] There is no choice. In such situations, we try to do everything to avoid harming civilians, which I am sure the IDF has been doing. I assume we will learn how it happened. Yet, despite everything, we must not forget our objectives. As a government, it is our foremost duty to defend the residents of northern Israel, but the responsibility for all the casualties and all the physical damage caused to south Lebanon lies directly with Hizballah and the Lebanese Government, which had a series of opportunities to take action to stop the firing of katyushas at the Galilee, opportunities which it chose to ignore, forcing us to take action.

[Margalit] Would the State of Israel make do with the understandings achieved after Operation Accountability in 1993, which were later violated by Hizballah? If Hizballah no longer violates them, will Israel settle for them?

[Baraq] All we want is: A. Not to have katyushas fired at the Galilee; B. To be able to permit the IDF to operate against Hizballah. If the Lebanese administration and the Syrians make a supreme effort to ensure the implementation of these clarifications, or the expansions of the understandings, including the pledge not to fire at the Galilee, we would find it satisfactory.

[Margalit] Have the Americans received at least the beginnings of an answer from any local Arab element of significance?

[Baraq] There has been an ongoing dialogue over the past 72 hours between ambassadors in Beirut and Damascus, as well as Tel Aviv, on the one hand, and the Middle East players on the other. In addition, there has been a dialogue between Christopher and the foreign ministers and prime ministers. I believe it will continue in the next day or two, and will possibly be accelerated to a certain extent by recent developments.

[Margalit] How will the recent developments affect Israel's ability to continue using its military power?

[Baraq] I believe they will generate growing criticism in international public opinion. I admit that even Israelis will be affected by the pictures, because no one is happy to see civilians harmed. However, being the ones to suffer from katyushas — and we could earlier see on your program what a house hit by a katyusha looks like; I brought ambassadors here to show them the damage in Qiryat Shemona and Nahariyya — as Israelis, we have to bite our lips and go on until we achieve the required results: a full termination of the launching of katyushas at the Galilee and appropriate action options for the IDF. By the way, the background noise you just heard were two more katyushas landing in Qiryat Shemona.

[Margalit] I hope no one was hurt. Nevertheless, after all the action taken by the air force, the artillery, and with the tanks waiting near the border fence, how can we explain the Hizballah capability to continue launching katyushas — with lesser accuracy in western Galilee and with greater accuracy in the Galilee panhandle?

[Baraq] Hizballah has hundreds katyushas in south Lebanon, which are possibly still being transported from there while the Syrians look the other way, or worse. We have never deluded ourselves; we have known all along that it would be a protracted struggle, and that Hizballah would not lose its desire to fight. What we did anticipate was that when the Lebanese Government understands how committed we are to achieving our objectives, and when the Syrians understand it, there would eventually be a readiness to achieve a political arrangement that will put an end to the katyushas and give the IDF freedom of action.

[Margalit] Minister Baraq, I believe you just said something about the Syrians looking the other way or worse. What did you mean?

[Baraq] I do not know. If katyushas continue landing, the Syrians must be either looking the other way or worse.

[Margalit] Can you say something specific about the worse part?

[Baraq] Not at the moment.

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[Margalit] Is there anything to it?

[Baraq] I do not know. When more information can be revealed, we will reveal it.

[Margalit] How did the ambassadors react to your explanations during the tour of the north?

[Baraq] Quite emotionally. The ambassador of Chile, a friendly country — as you know, Chile is the current UN Security Council president — who is a former education minister, saw the school that was hit by a katyusha and said he was appalled at the thought of what could have happened had the children been in classrooms at the time.

[Margalit] Minister Baraq, here is a report on a poll provided by Professor Avi Degani, which I would normally hold for our news flash. About 86 percent of the Jewish population of Israel believe that the operation launched by the government is the correct thing to do, and a large proportion of these people believe the operation should be even larger in scope. Do you view this rate of support as sufficient to continue the operation?

[Baraq] It definitely is. It is amazingly massive support, and it is important. However, I believe the government should have launched the operation to defend its population if only 55 or even 35 percent were in favor. The government rules and operates to protect the deeper interests of the State of Israel, and not to suit the moods on any given day.

[Margalit] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, thank you very much.

Israel: Peres, Shahaq Brief Media on Lebanon Events

TA1804181096 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1716 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Media briefing by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, chief of staff, at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Peres] I will begin by citing the UN spokesperson's statement, which summed up the events very nicely. Briefing the media, the UN spokesperson announced that the UN commander in south Lebanon confirmed that about 15 minutes before the Israeli barrage, two katyushas and several mortar bombs were fired at Israeli troops. In her official media briefing, the spokesperson said that it is a Hizballah practice to hide behind civilians when shooting at Israeli troops or at Israel itself.

Hizballah will bring disaster upon Lebanon! It has pursued a policy that contradicts Lebanon's interests and, commanded by Iran, it seeks to destroy the peace process. Ever since the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, its conduct has been unremittingly aggressive. And I have no wish to hear their tall tales! As we were convening in Sharm al-Shaykh, they started firing at the security zone without any provocation, and there has not been a day without attacks since then: They sent a hang glider, they sent suicide terrorists, they fired katyushas, they fired mortars, they fired guns, they tried to harm IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers and the population in the north. Their grand strategy consists of hiding behind the Lebanese civilians. They do it all the time! That is why we asked the Lebanese civilians, with whom we have no complaint — we do not want any of them to be killed, because they are not our enemies — we asked them to evacuate the places from which Hizballah has been firing at Israel in a bid to provoke an Israeli reaction at the source of the initial fire. By the way, we have learned from the United Nations that a day earlier Hizballah launched katyushas at Israel from that very spot, and a UN soldier who asked the terrorists to stop firing, was apparently shot and wounded by them.

We have a problem with a dreadful, stupid, irresponsible organization, but we are not preoccupied with it; we are preoccupied with the defense of Israel. When our troops are out there trying to prevent the launching of katyushas, and they come under mortar fire while going about their task, they may exercise their right of self-defense. As much as I regret the killing of civilians — and I do — the only guilty party is Hizballah, and if the Syrians and Lebanese fail to stop it, they will bring tragedy upon Lebanon.

We have asked for nothing other than that they should stop firing at civilians, but if they do fire at our civilians or our soldiers, we will return fire in defense. A responsible state has a duty to do so. We are not bloodthirsty, nor do we seek adventure.

I hope those who have to enlist.... [pauses] Another very grave incident took place in Egypt today, and I do not even want to guess why these people, equally innocent, were shot. We have no aggressive plans. If Lebanon thinks we should withdraw from the security zone, it has a right to think so, but it could sit down and negotiate with us — and not use the likes of Hizballah katyushas. Anyway, no one has ever gotten anything out of Israel with gunfire. The agreement with Egypt was not the result of war, but of negotiations. The Oslo A and B agreements only happened after the PLO renounced terrorism, and not because of terrorism. The same goes for Jordan. If Lebanon wants an agreement and is capable of conducting negotiations, al-Hariri or the Lebanese president should come and sit down at negotiations, and make their stands known. But not by

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force, not with katyushas, not with bombs, not with threats!

I regret the death of every innocent person, every woman, and every child on our side of the border and on theirs. I do not differentiate between our blood and theirs, but I do differentiate between aggression and self-defense. Israel had no choice left but to defend its citizens. And although I regret the events, I do not doubt that it is our duty as a state to continue defending the state and peace.

[Shahaq] I will provide you with the details as we know them, according to our investigation so far. At approximately five minutes before 1400 [1100 GMT] IDF forces came under katyusha and mortar fire. The firing was directed from the vicinity of Qana, at the distance of approximately 350 meter from a UN installation or camp. At the beginning the firing was intermittent, but later it continued and in our opinion endangered our forces. Consequently we returned fire, and as a result of this Lebanese civilians who took cover in a UNIFIL [UN Interim Force in Lebanon] camp manned by a Fijian battalion were injured.

From what I heard from UNIFIL commanders later, more than 550 civilians were staying there. These are civilians who have apparently come from the villages we ordered to be evacuated at the beginning of the operation. Apparently some of the civilians came to stay in the vicinity of the camp.

As you already heard, according to the people who were there — and this coincides completely with what we know — the terrorists fired 300 meters away from where the civilians were staying. This is not the first time in this operation that Hizballah terrorists directed fire from the vicinity of UNIFIL positions and installations. They also fire from inside villages, and not accidentally. This is the main reason that we told the villagers at the beginning of the operation to evacuate villages and other places that the Hizballah terrorists were using to fire at us.

Several minutes after returning fire we received a report from the UN about the firing. Three UN personnel were also hurt and were evacuated for treatment to Haifa's Rambam Hospital. We said that if we could do anything else to treat the casualties, we would receive for treatment whoever wants to be treated by us.

From crosschecking what happened with the UN we concluded that there is agreement on times and the order of events so I see no point in repeating this. We also informed the UN we planned to open fire — there is a mechanism where every time such a thing happens we inform the UN first. To the best of my knowledge, whenever terrorists fire from the vicinity of UN positions and the UN personnel are unable to prevent this from happening, they know there is a possibility we will return fire, so they take cover.

I already said this is not the first time during this operation, or even before it, that the terrorists fired from the vicinity of UN positions. The large and regrettable number of casualties is the result of hundreds of people crowding into one or two buildings. This is why the result was so devastating and grave and so many people were hurt.

[TV 2's 'Imanu'el Rosen] Mr. Prime Minister, you seem to be extremely angry, but I want to ask you whether you believe this tragic incident will facilitate the political moves and whether Israel will agree to a cease fire even before completing the talks.

With your permission I also want to direct a question to the chief of staff: After we heard the explanation about what happened, do you believe there was a misjudgment here on the part of those responsible for firing the artillery?

[Peres] I want to correct you. I am not angry, I am serious, because the situation is serious. You are simply mistaken in describing my mood. Obviously I am grieved; the fact that we reached this situation does not make us happy. I thought that the political negotiations should be facilitated even without this incident, and they could have prevented it. Israel is not responsible for the slowdown in the negotiations. I have the impression that some of the forces that appear to be ostensibly moderate send katyusha rockets to Hizballah in order for them to continue firing. We received a message purporting that Iran is looking for moderation. Well, it is seeking moderation in Paris while shipping katyushas to Lebanon.

[Shahaq] Based on the examinations we have carried out and to the best of my knowledge regarding the details at this time, I see no misjudgment here. We are fighting Hizballah, and when our forces come under fire they return fire to defend themselves. When we are fired upon from anywhere — and this firing endangers us — we return fire on whoever endangers us. I am not familiar with any other rules of the game, whether this refers to soldiers or civilians.

I believe that the party deployed near the place from where the firing is being directed should first of all strive to prevent this firing, and those who remain in an area from where fire is being directed at our forces should realize it is very dangerous. I do not believe that as a commander sending soldiers to carry out missions I have the right to tell them that under certain conditions we

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cannot help them when they are coming under serious fire.

[TV 1's Menashe Raz] Mr. Prime Minister, you will probably agree that this is a turning point in the Lebanon situation. Do you believe that as a result of this unfortunate incident any agreement achieved will be less good than what we could have achieved before this incident?

[Peres] I do not know what you mean by a good agreement or a bad agreement. We want one basic thing: to put an end to the firing from Lebanon against Israeli civilians. This is the agreement, this is what we want to achieve. If the parties want to reach a peace arrangement then peace negotiations should be conducted. If Lebanon can do it independently, it is welcome to do so. If it can do it only in tandem — that is, two parties riding one bicycle — so be it. Not, however, by means of firing katyushas.

[Qol Yisra'el's Shlomo Raz] Mr. Prime Minister, first: Did the IDF receive new orders following today's incident? Second: Does the expected arrival of Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Saturday [20 April] night indicate we are extremely close to new understandings — whether coinciding with Israel's desires or not?

[Peres] The IDF received unequivocal orders not to harm civilians. I must be fair, however, and say that the IDF did not need these directives. It is not as though the IDF wanted to harm civilians and had to be told by the government not to harm them. The IDF, of its own accord, proposed taking great care not to harm civilians. This is the reason why there has been no firing at villages. Only when we know that katyushas are being fired from a certain house in a village do we hit this house after the villagers have been warned to leave. We did not shell villages. The incident in which two children or one child were killed happened when they drove in a Hizballah van with an armed driver. He simply took these children into his van. This is our real problem.

We welcome the arrival of Christopher to the region and hope he will succeed in advancing the negotiations.

[IDF Radio's Udi Segal] Mr. Prime Minister, you were quoted in one of the newspapers today as saying that the Lebanese are breaking. From what we see so far the operation is not achieving its goals; the Lebanese are not breaking and we are continuing these bombardments with an extremely grave price in terms of civilian casualties.

My second question deals with the new understandings you would like to achieve. From what we know, these amount to the 1993 Operation Accountability understandings plus preserving the IDF's freedom of action in the security zone. Following today's events, however, do you believe Lebanon and Syria can accept such new understandings?

[Peres] First, I believe that Lebanon is broken and weak. Lebanon is really broken; it is the real victim. It is not our victim, however, it is a victim of Hizballah. We have not broken Lebanon and we have no intention of breaking it. It is broken, among other reasons, because it does not know how to overcome this situation — and this does not just depend on it.

Referring to the understandings, we had understandings in 1993 and all of a sudden Hizballah decided to violate them. We are not begging for anything. The right of self-defense is anchored in the UN Charter. We do not require Hizballah's agreement to exercise our right of self-defense. We can and do warn people — we do not want to see any woman, child, or civilian in Lebanon get killed. But they are Hizballah's victims. If we are searching for understandings, it is precisely to prevent the killing of civilians. We do not need anybody's permission to defend ourselves.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 18 April carries political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen's remarks, adding: "I asked the prime minister before the news conference if it were true that Syria is continuing to help Hizballah by supplying it with katyushas. The prime minister's reply was: I refuse to answer this question. I think this reply says it all."]

Israel: Inner Cabinet Empowers Peres To Negotiate Cease-Fire

TA1804191496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Clinton has announced that he has called on the parties in Lebanon to stop fighting immediately. He further announced that he asked Secretary of State Christopher to travel to the Middle East. It was earlier reported that envoy Dennis Ross was on his way to our region.

The inner cabinet this evening empowered the prime minister to conduct negotiations on the U.S. demand for a cease-fire in Lebanon. This was reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 18 April adds: "The United States is acting to secure a cease-fire in south Lebanon beginning tonight. Israel has consented to a cease-fire, provided Syria and Lebanon pledge to curb Hizballah, our political correspondent Udi Segal reports. The United States has approached Damascus and Beirut on this matter, and according to

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the U.S. proposal, negotiations on long-term understandings will be conducted during the cease-fire."]

Israel: Peres Informs U.S. of Willingness for Immediate Cease-Fire

TA1904051996 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 19 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has informed the United States that it is willing to effect an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon if Hizballah also holds its fire, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told YEDI'OT AHARONOT last night.

Peres disclosed that he had discussed the issue with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. "The negotiations on the new arrangements can be conducted even when there is a cease-fire in the area. There is no need to shoot," he said.

Until yesterday evening decisionmakers were not considering a halt to the operation. The assumption was that a cease-fire amid negotiations would lessen the political fruits of the operation. This line was championed by Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who argued that the operation should continue in parallel with the political talks.

Indeed, even after the special inner cabinet session held in Tel Aviv last night, Peres still believed that the operation would continue as planned. Of all inner cabinet members, only Ministers Yosi Sarid and Ya'ir Tzaban demanded that the operation be called off, saying it had obtained its objectives.

In the course of the evening, however, the United States brought pressure to bear on Israel to stop the firing in Lebanon at once. President Clinton called for such a move while visiting Russia, and the Americans even initiated a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon.

[A report by David Makovsky and Hillel Kutler on pages 1 and 2 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 19 April adds: "At the inner cabinet meeting, sources say everyone but Environment Minister Yosi Sarid backed Peres' opinion that the campaign should not be stopped despite the killings.

["Sarid said in the meeting, 'It is easy to start a war, but you don't know how it will end. This is what happens when wars go badly.'

["Yet Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq insisted last night that the operation is not finished.

["'I estimate that the operation will continue,' Baraq said. 'I estimate at least a few days. But it's impossible to put a limit on it. It could take a week to 10 days.'

["Yet shortly after Baraq's statement, the guns in Lebanon fell silent and it remains unclear how long this will last.

["Minister Without Portfolio Yosi Beilin, now visiting Washington, told Israeli reporters that Jerusalem is prepared to cease its bombing campaign 'without any conditions' providing that katyushas stop falling on the Galilee.

["Any formal understandings between Israel, Syria, and Lebanon would be 'a bonus,' Beilin added."]

Israel: Poll Shows 86 Percent Support for Lebanon Operation

TA1804170796 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1400 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Studio interview with Dr. Avi Degani of the Geocartographia Institute by Dan Margalit — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Margalit] Dr. Degani, let us start with the Lebanon issue. Your questions probed the Israeli — Jewish and Arab — public's views on the Lebanon operation. What answers did you receive?

[Degani] Last night we got the following answers: 51 percent believe the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] reaction is both just and appropriate, while an additional 35 percent — adding up to 86 percent — think the reaction should have been even stronger.

[Margalit] What about the Jew-Arab breakdown?

[Degani] The breakdown is very curious on this issue. A vast majority of the Arab public — 76 percent — believed Israel should have continued to exercise restraint. Only 4-5 percent shared the sentiments of the Jewish public. The poll was conducted over the past 24 hours.

[Margalit] Then it genuinely reflects Operation Grapes of Wrath, which is into its second week. My next question is: What does your poll say about the perennial race between Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu?

[Degani] There are no surprises and no victors. The poll shows no major change. Shim'on Peres has 3 percent less support than he had last week — 48 percent, down from 51 last week. Bibi Netanyahu is stable with 43 percent. The number of undecided voters has grown slightly, although there are several unexplained factors. Some voters seem to have crossed over or are considering crossing over to the Likud, but this issue is not quite clear. [passage omitted]

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[Margalit] How about the race between the two major blocs?

[Degani] It has hardly changed since last week: 57 percent for each of the blocs, the left-wing bloc comprising Meretz and the Arab parties, and the right-wing bloc comprising the religious parties. [passage omitted]

Israel: Arab Groups Condemn Lebanon Events, Urge Election Boycott

TA1804171796 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1630 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli Arab Follow-Up Committee has issued a sharp condemnation of the latest Lebanon developments and called on the prime minister to launch immediate negotiations on a cessation of the fighting in Lebanon.

The Arab National Democratic Alliance party, which merged with HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality], called on the Israeli Arabs and the left wing to boycott the Israeli elections in the wake of the events.

Israel: Netanyahu Supports Continued Lebanon Operation

TA1804184096 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Studio interview with Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by anchor Ya'aqov Eylon — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Eylon] Good evening, Mr. Netanyahu.

[Netanyahu] Good evening.

[Eylon] A brief initial reaction to tonight's events?

[Netanyahu] Israel does not want to harm Lebanon or the Lebanese people. A very regrettable and disturbing incident has taken place, but I am certain that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will learn the appropriate lessons from it. What matters is that the prime minister has my support to continue the operation in order to avoid regressing to the situation that preceded it, in order to restore security in northern Israel.

[Eylon] Do you think the way the operation has been conducted should be modified in any way?

[Netanyahu] I do not want to discuss the specifics of military operations. Two days ago I was briefed in detail by the Northern Command on the IDF's various capabilities and operations plans, but it would be inappropriate for me to discuss them here. The IDF should be given license to continue its operation, and at the same time it should draw the appropriate conclusions from the recent unfortunate events. It should continue smashing the Hizballah infrastructure in south Lebanon in order to prevent their attacks. However, it should add one missing element — a political attack on Syria, without whom Hizballah would be unable to operate. These two arms — the military against Hizballah and the political against Syria — can, I believe, deliver the necessary results. I believe this operation will be a success if it results in a situation that differs from the one that existed before the operation, if it truly puts an end to the launching of katyushas at our northern towns. [passage omitted]

Israel: Foreign Ministry's Savir on Lebanon Cease-Fire

TA1904055396 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0400 GMT 19 Apr 96

[Interview with Uri Savir, Israeli Foreign Ministry director general, by Udi Segal in Jerusalem on 18 April — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Segal] Is there a Syrian-Lebanon response to the American cease-fire call?

[Savir] Not that we know of. It is obvious that a cease-fire cannot be one-sided. If the attacks and katyushas continue, there cannot be a cease-fire. We wanted a cease-fire before and during the military operation in order to prevent Hizballah attacks. I believe that the U.S. initiative and President Clinton's news conference present a very clear and direct question to the Governments of Syria and Lebanon, and when we hear the answer we will know whether that aim has been achieved.

[Segal] In the meantime, Syria is avoiding an answer. It responded negatively to the U.S. proposal presented the night of 16 April on new understandings, and now it is holding up its response to a cease-fire. Is it really interested in restoring quiet to the region?

[Savir] The Syrians are playing a game of nerves. This is undoubtedly a sad day, but we also have strong nerves. This is an important operation and it will be concluded when the goals are achieved. Therefore, Syria will have to provide answers not only about its position on a cease-fire, but also on its attitude toward peace and terrorism.

[Segal] Do you not feel that while you tried to achieve a cease-fire as the first stage toward a political arrangement or resumption of negotiations, al-Asad played games with you?

[Savir] I suggest that we wait and see. It is a very sad crisis. On the face of it, there appears to be a contradiction between a military operation and a peace

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process, but when you are facing an organization like Hizballah and a guiding force behind it — like Iran, which wants to sabotage the process and murder Israelis — there is no choice but to take military action.

In the long run, I believe that we will force the governments we are facing to make a choice. They might not choose the path of peace, and if they do not, then they apparently had not intended to make that choice beforehand. If Syria really has a peace strategy and Lebanon knows that the only solution for its problems lies within a peace framework, then with patience and a continuation of the military operation — if that is necessary — and if possible a joint cease-fire together with negotiations — while clearly defining the aims of Israel's security and this government's aims to advance the process — I have no doubt we will reach the correct understandings.

[Segal] Before reaching peace, what understandings do we want? Something similar to those reached in 1993, or more?

[Savir] They must be better than those reached in 1993 because there was a misunderstanding about those understandings. That is even more obvious now, with each side — the United States and us on the one hand, and the Syrians on the other — talking about different understandings. It is more accurate to talk about the 1993 misunderstandings, which will have to be turned into the understandings of 1996: They will have to be clear-cut and precise. They will have to choose: either a peace process or terrorism.

Israel: UNIFIL Denies IDF Not Informed of Refugees at Camp

TA1904062496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] has said it was warned by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] that it would be shelling Qana about five minutes after the artillery shells had already hit the UNIFIL camp. UN officers told our correspondent Hayim Hecht that this was learned from an investigation UNIFIL conducted in the field.

The UN officers rejected the IDF claim that Israel did not know that the UN camp contained hundreds of Lebanese refugees. They said the United Nations made it known to the IDF early in the week. UNIFIL also said that contrary to Lebanese reports, UN soldiers were not killed in the incidents. Four Fijian soldiers were seriously wounded.

Israel: Israeli Spokesman Says Hizballah To Blame for Conflict

MS1904085496 London Channel 4 Television Network in English 800 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Interview with Israeli Government spokesman Yuri Dromi, in Jerusalem, by Jon Snow in the studio; from the "Channel 4 News" broadcast — live]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Snow] Well we're joined now from Jerusalem by the Israeli Government spokesman Yuri Dromi. Yuri Dromi it's very hard to resist the view that what is happening is that you have driven civilians from their homes, watched them being herded into these bases and then shelled them.

[Dromi] Nothing of the sort. Unfortunately we were drawn into this exchange of fire, of violence by the Hizballah, after exhausting all our patience, all our venues of diplomacy, after being shelled by the Hizballah for many weeks without being provoked and then we had to take action to defend ourselves. In order not to hurt the civilians we called upon to clear and to evacuate their villages and to disassociate themselves from the Hizballah. Those who did so were safe. Unfortunately the Hizballah very viciously hid themselves in the middle of a populated area so that... to use the population as a human shield.

[Snow] Now let me just stop you there for a moment because here we had 400 refugees gathered in a place that you know to be a UN base, very well demarcated and that you are not allowed to hit within 500 meters of.

[Dromi] Well the fact is that very close from this camp, the UN camp, the Hizballah position some Katyusha launchers and mortars and this has been confirmed by the UN official spokeswoman, and they fired at our forces which have the right to defend themselves, they shot back, unfortunately those mortars and katyusha launchers were positioned by the Hizballah deliberately, very close to the civilians and the civilians were hurt. We regret the loss of life, we regret the loss of innocent life but it's only the Hizballah to blame for this vicious kind of method.

[Snow] But you can watch these bases through the intelligence equipment that you have. We had your policy chief Mr. Lubrani on the other night who said you'd been able to hit a specific house in a Palestinian camp, it happens that the man you wanted wasn't in it. But on this occasion these hi-tech precision weapons mysteriously seem to have blown up a refugee population in a camp?

[Dromi] First of all we are conducting a thorough investigation of what would happen [as heard], and

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when the full results will be available they will be available to the public and to the media. But I can assure you that we have no deliberate intention of hitting civilians. We have definitely no intention of hitting UN camps, or personnel, on the contrary we work with them on a daily basis. This is something which was caused by the Hizballah positioning their mortars and their katyusha launchers in the middle of a populated area. This is a tragedy that has been brought upon them by the Hizballah. I hope it will stop.

[Snow] Isn't it perhaps the wisest thing tonight to call a ceasefire and get talking?

[Dromi] We have stipulated in the decision of the government after it's meeting on Sunday [14 April that once the Hizballah stop launching katyushas in the north, we will stop the operation. So the ball clearly lies in their court, and also in the court of the Lebanese Government who cannot anymore wash it's hands from its responsibility to restrain the Hizballah.

[Snow] Well they say that if you get out of southern Lebanon, the cause that gives the Hizballah political cover for their guerrilla activities will be removed, and they will then move against them.

[Dromi] That's an old story and we've heard this before. We made it clear many times in the past, that we have no territorial claim on even one inch of Lebanese territory, but the reason why we have to deploy some of our forces there is that we were subject to so much aggression coming from Lebanon, with the Lebanese Government doing nothing about it. In the framework of a comprehensive peace process we will see that the Lebanese with us and broker a peace deal by which it will take responsibility over the north as soon as possible.

Israel: Further Details of 'Arafat-Peres Meeting Reported

TA1804151396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestine National Council [PNC] will convene in Gaza next Monday [22 May], and will deal, among other things, with changing the Palestinian Charter. This was announced by Yasir 'Arafat during a meeting with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres at the Erez checkpoint today.

Most of the meeting between the two was devoted to the Palestinian Authority's [PA] struggle against terrorism. The heads of the Palestinian intelligence apparatus said Iran is trying to direct Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip against the peace process and the PA. The participants decided to hold further consultations on easing measures in the closure and the evacuation of Hebron. Economic issues were also discussed.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1400 GMT at 18 April adds that "asked why Israel had allowed the entry of terrorists such as Layla Khalid and George Habash to attend the PNC meeting, Peres said it is preferable that they be in Gaza where terrorism is being fought than in Syria where it isn't.

["The Israeli military operation in Lebanon was also discussed. Yasir 'Arafat called for a return to the agreement reached after 1993's Operation Accountability.

["Reacting to reports of civilian casualties in al-Nabatiyah this morning, Prime Minister Peres blamed Hizballah." Saying that Hizballah opened fire on our forces from 'Ali al-Tahir Ridge, Peres is quoted as adding: "We have replied with fire, and then the group of the terrorists run and hide itself away in al-Nabatiyah. We continued to fire at them, and then from another house in al-Nabatiyah they opened fire again, and we have replied, we have answered. If there were civilian lives in this house, it's a crime. They cannot go and take over a civilian house and open fire upon our forces. We couldn't know that there may be civilians in the house when they are shooting from it, because we very strict not to kill, not to hit civilian life in Lebanon, surely not women, surely not children."]

Israel: Poll Shows Peres Retaining Lead in Premiership Race

TA1904085696 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 19 Apr 96 p 13

[Public opinion poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute directed by Dr. Mina Tzemah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: Were elections for the premiership held today and the candidates were Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu, for whom would you vote? (The answers are quoted in percentage points, with the findings of the poll conducted on 5 April given in brackets)

Answer: Peres — 50 (51); Netanyahu — 45 (45); did not reply/undecided — 5 (4).

The 1-percent drop in support for Peres occurred yesterday. Some 10 percent of his supporters in the Arab sector switched to the category of floating votes.

Question: Were elections to the Knesset held today, for which party would you vote? (The answers are quoted in Knesset seats, with the findings of the poll conducted on 5 April given in brackets)

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Party	Forecast	Current Knesset
Labor	44 (43)	44
Likud, Tzomet, Gesher	42 (41-42)	40
Meretz	6 (6)	12
Moledet	2 (2-3)	3
National Religious Party	5 (5-6)	6
United Torah Jewry	4 (4)	4
SHAS	4-5 (4-5)	6
HADASH, ADP, al-Tibi	7 (7)	5 without al-Tibi
The Third Way	1-2 (2)	—
Yisra'el Ba'aliya	4 (4)	—

[Key to abbreviations: SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]; HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality]; ADP [Arab Democratic Party]

The poll was conducted on 16 and 17 April among 530 respondents who constitute a representative sample of Israel's adult population. The maximum margin of error is 4 percent.

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Jordan: King Condemns 'Treacherous Israeli Aggression'

JN1804173496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn emphasized the need for an immediate end to Israeli aggression and the criminal actions committed by Israeli troops against Lebanese civilians and innocents. This statement came in a meeting with the Lebanese ambassador in Amman, William Habib. Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti attended the meeting, which was held at the Royal Hashemite Court.

His majesty briefed the Lebanese ambassador on Jordan's diplomatic endeavors and his personal efforts to stop the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. His majesty asserted that Jordan, both government and people, categorically condemn the treacherous Israeli aggression and the criminal military operations against the fraternal Lebanese people. He added: Jordan asserts the need to halt the Israeli aggression and criminal actions that the Israeli troops are committing against Lebanese civilians and innocents. At the same time, Jordan asserts the necessity to resort to the logic of dialogue and negotiations and remove the causes of conflict through the completion of the peace process and Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories.

His majesty warned against the consequences of continuing this aggression, which jeopardizes the entire peace process and threatens to return the region to a state of tension and conflict. He called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and immediately halt the sinful Israeli aggression against the fraternal Lebanese people.

The Lebanese ambassador extended the thanks of his government and country for his majesty's stand and for Jordan's efforts to support the Lebanese people and put an end to the aggression and criminal actions against them.

Jordan: Prime Minister Conveys 'Strong Protest' to Israeli Envoy

JN1804180696 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister ['Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti] summoned the Israeli ambassador in Amman this afternoon to convey the Jordanian Government's strong protest against the ongoing Israeli aggression against Lebanon, particularly the massacre that was perpetrated against unarmed civilians today.

The prime minister told the Israeli ambassador: Jordan has been following the latest Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the negative repercussions of these aggressions on the entire peace process with concern. Over the past few days, Jordan has carried out an extensive diplomatic effort to contain the crisis and convince the Israeli side of the need to renounce its aggressive policy, which will only lead to more deterioration and frustration and kill the entire peace process.

He added: Jordan feels that its quiet diplomatic efforts have not been met with the required degree of awareness and sense of responsibility. They were met with an excessive continuation of the serious military escalation that has targeted unarmed civilians and has exceeded all justifications. Jordan, in light of these serious developments, strongly condemns these bloody massacres and urges the international community to take all measures to immediately put an end to the Israeli aggressions. No election goals should be realized through aggressive military means. Jordan will continue its extensive efforts, along with all countries, to salvage the peace process from the serious deterioration caused by the Israeli military aggressions.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti, Egyptian Prime Minister Discuss Lebanon Events

JN1804211696 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti phoned Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri and Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. During the two phone calls, al-Kabariti discussed the latest developments in Lebanon, the Israeli military escalation and its repercussions, the overall impact on the peace process, and the threat these events pose to it. Al-Kabariti also condemned the criminal attack against the foreign tourists in Cairo this morning.

Jordan: Minister—Peace Treaty Does Not Contradict Arab Commitments

JN1804165996 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khalid al-Madadihah, minister of state for foreign affairs, and his delegation returned to Amman at dawn today. The delegation represented Jordan at the emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers held at Arab League headquarters on 17 April. The meeting was held in response to a request by

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Lebanon to discuss ways to face the Israeli aggression against it.

The Jordanian delegation briefed the Arab ministers on the intensive efforts and contacts by His Majesty King Husayn and the prime minister to bring about an immediate halt to the bloodshed and the Israeli military operations and to resume the peace negotiations. The use of military force will complicate things and obstruct the peace march, which everybody wants to maintain so that a just and comprehensive peace can be achieved in the region. This peace can guarantee the rights of people of the region and enable them to achieve security and prosperity.

The Jordanian delegation also emphasized Jordan's commitment to Arab charters and solidarity, noting that the peace treaty with Israel does not contradict this Jordanian commitment. Jordan is using this treaty to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The Jordanian delegation's participation in this emergency session was an opportunity for the head of the delegation to meet with several Arab foreign ministers and discuss ways to enhance bilateral relations.

Jordan: Agreement To Reschedule Country's Debts to Italy Signed

JN1704210596 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1600 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordan and Italy have signed an agreement to reschedule $34.1 million, in installments and interests, of Italian loans to the kingdom. The agreement is in line with an accord signed in June 1994 between Jordan and the Paris Club of creditor nations. Under today's agreement, Jordan will pay back $12.8 million in bilateral loans to Italy over 20 years with a 10-year grace period. Jordan will also pay $21.3 million in export loans to Italy over 15 years, including a 5-year grace period.

The agreement was signed in Amman by Finance Minister Marwan 'Awad and Italian Ambassador Francesco (Serolli). Mr. 'Awad said the signing was the culmination of Jordan's efforts to reschedule its foreign debt. He said the kingdom had signed 13 debt-rescheduling agreements with creditor nations, under which $1.2 billion had been rescheduled. The minister said Jordan's foreign debt now stood at $6.3 billion and added the rescheduling would have a positive impact on the balance of payments and ease the hard currency burden on the budget.

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Lebanon: 'At Least 43 Civilians' Killed in Shelling of Qana

NC1804125296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1244 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to an urgent AFP report from the south, citing the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, at least 30 people were killed by an Israeli bombardment of Qana this afternoon.

[In a related report Paris AFP in English at 1255 GMT on 18 April adds the following: "At least 43 civilians were killed in an Israeli bombardment here on Thursday [18 April], an officer from the UN peacekeeping force said."]

Lebanon: Radio Cites UNIFIL on 43 Dead in Qana 'Massacre'

NC1804130896 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1253 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is a report just in from the newsdesk: The Israeli troops committed a new massacre this afternoon in Qana. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] has reported that the shelling of Qana left at least 43 civilians dead.

Lebanon: UNIFIL Officer Reports Fiji Soldiers, 'Many' Civilians Injured

TA1804131596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] UNIFIL [UN Interim Force in Lebanon] press officer Timur Goksel has announced that IDF [Israel Defense Forces] artillery shelled Qafr Qana near Tyre, causing injury to UN soldiers from Fiji and many civilians.

Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e further cites the UN representative as saying that contact with the Fiji contingent had been lost, and many rescue teams were on their way to the location.

Red Cross sources in Tyre reported dozens of casualties.

Lebanon: Early Reports Say Over 80 Killed or Wounded in Qana

NC1804132296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1304 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Initial reports say that over 80 people were killed or wounded in the Israeli bombardment targeting a Fijian contingent position in Qana.

Some 45 people are known to have been killed.

A UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] officer said a shell hit the Fijian position and damaged a depot that UNIFIL put at the disposal of people displaced from southern villages. There were over 50 people inside.

The Tyre and Sidon hospitals have made urgent appeals for blood, antibiotics, and medicine. They have also asked doctors to head immediately to the Tyre hospitals.

Lebanon: 150 Casualties Reported at Fijian Post in Qana

NC1804132796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1305 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editors desk: Two Israeli gunboats have been cruising off the Lebanese coast between al-Rumaylah and al-Awwali. Missiles are being fired at passing vehicles on this coastal road. A black Toyota station wagon has been hit, but it is not known if there are casualties. The coastal road is empty as panic grips the area. Tulin and al-Sawwanah are coming under violent 120-mm and 155-mm artillery barrages from the Israeli positions in al-'Abbad and Muhaybib. The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY has learned that there are more than 150 dead and injured in Qana. Three children 'Ali Hydar Bitar, Hadi Haydar Bitar, and Muhammad Haydar Bitar are among the dead. Thirty wounded people have been evacuated to the Najm Hospital and 40 to the Jabal 'Amil Hospital. The Najm Hospital appealed to ambulances to take the wounded to Beirut.

Lebanon: Qana's Toll Reaches 'at Least' 65 Civilian Dead, 100 Wounded

NC1804142896 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1410 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An officer in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon told AFP that the toll from the Israeli bombardment of Qana has risen to at least 65 civilian dead. The officer added that at least 100 people were wounded in the bombardment that targeted the Fijian headquarters, which was giving shelter to Lebanese civilians who left their villages in the south because of the Israeli bombardment.

Elsewhere, Israeli warships have started to retreat along the coast extending from Sidon to al-Sa'diyat. The internal security forces allowed cars to take the coastal road a short time ago.

Lebanon: Qana Toll Rises to 100 'Martyrs'; Figure Likely to Rise

NC1804165796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Medical sources told us a short time ago that the number of victims in the Qana

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massacre has exceeded 100 martyrs. The figure is likely to rise.

In another development, Israeli warplanes raided townships in the central sector [of the border strip] shortly after 1900 (1600 GMT).

Lebanon: Israeli Warships Bombard Tyre; 18 Still Missing at Qana

NC1804171896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1709 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editorial desk: We learned a short while ago that Israeli warships anchored off the Lebanese coast are currently bombarding Tyre.

Meanwhile, 18 people at the post of the UN Fijian contingent of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon are still missing. Some doctors confirm that they are burned corpses.

Lebanon: Health Minister Criticized for Lack of Medicine in South

NC1804185896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1807 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Report by correspondent Qasim Safa from the Tyre area — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the terrible massacre perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces this afternoon right under the UN flag at the Fiji contingent's command center in Qana, the leading figures of Tyre called for a meeting. Afterward they issued a statement condemning the massacre, which claimed the lives of more than 90 citizens, the majority of them children, old men, and women.

They expressed surprise at Health Minister Marwan Hamadah's remarks about the medical preparations at the Tyre hospitals. The statement says: We have not seen any preparations there. The statement then asks: Why have these supplies not reached the hospitals more than eight days after the start of the Israeli attacks? To this day, we have not seen the field hospitals or the medical teams that are touring the displaced persons centers and about which the minister talks daily to the press. The evidence of what we say is that the Tyre hospitals have from the first day been appealing for the necessary medical supplies. They shouted even louder today because there are no surgeons, anesthetists, or necessary medical supplies. There not even any bags for donated blood.

The statement calls on the Public Health Ministry measure up to the level of the people's sacrifices and [words indistinct].

Lebanon: Radio Blames Hizballah for Provoking Qana Attack

NC1804153796 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1518 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received the following:

Sources have said that a UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] spokesman stated a short time ago that Hizballah terrorists fired a salvo of katyushas on western Galilee from near this UNIFIL position in Qana 15 minutes before it was hit. This led to the bombardment of the position.

This shows us that the Hizballah terrorists are still using the UNIFIL and unarmed civilians as a shield for their terrorist actions, thus hurting civilians.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri on Contacts With Hizballah for Cease-Fire

NC1904084496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0746 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference held at 1000 at the Government House today, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stated that he has begun contacts with Hizballah to bring about a cease-fire. He says that this will take some time so that Hizballah can contact its members who are deployed in the combat areas. He said he believes that this will require three or four days. He said:

[Begin recording] [al-Hariri] The next stage involves negotiations to achieve peace in the region. All people want peace in the region. We want peace. However, the manner Israel is using is leading to the opposite. The situation appears as if Israel is saying it wants peace according to its own conditions. It wants to conquer and force everyone through the means it is using. If you recall, from the first day I warned that this method would never succeed. The issue of Hizballah, regardless of our relations with it, cannot be solved by force. A Lebanese area is occupied by Israel and because of this occupation, Hizballah represents a resistance to this occupation. No government or army in Lebanon, neither I nor anyone else, can make a decision to disarm Hizballah while Israel continues to occupy part of south Lebanon. If we do this, we will be helping the occupation, which no one will ever do. The solution lies in Israel understanding that it cannot secure its borders through occupation of part of the Lebanese territory.

Yesterday evening I heard Israeli Prime Minister Peres say that the Israelis are defending themselves. I can understand that he can defend himself when he is inside the Israeli borders. Then he would actually be defending

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himself when an aggression occurs against him. But when he is staying on our land and the Lebanese resistance is striking at him because he is on our land and is bombarding Lebanon from Lebanese territory, how can he say that he is defending himself? In fact, he is defending his occupation of our land and not himself.

[Unidentified correspondent] [indistinct question]

[Al-Hariri] What is being proposed now, in other words, the French and Americans are talking of a temporary agreement to end the major military operations while preserving the resistance's right to resist the occupation.

[Correspondent] [indistinct question]

[Al-Hariri] We have always maintained that if Israel withdraws from Lebanon there will be no reason for anyone to carry arms or to fight Israel inside its borders. But as long as Israel continues to occupy part of our land, we cannot force anyone not to resist this occupation, particularly because most of the resistance fighters are youths who come from the occupied area. They are defending their land and homes. This is in line with human rights and the United Nations. The whole world recognizes this right. In his televised statement yesterday, Peres was trying to invert the facts. He said that human rights, the United Nations, and the UN resolutions give one the right to self-defense. This is true if one defends himself when he is inside his territory and not attacking others. When he occupies part of the Lebanese territory and says he is defending himself, this is not normal talk. [end recording]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri 'Shocked' by Peres' Comments on Israeli Attack

LD1804210996 Paris France-2 Television Network in French 1800 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, in Damascus, by correspondent Daniel Bilalian in Paris studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Bilalian] I will now change the schedule of this news bulletin as we have Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri on the phone from Damascus. Mr. Hariri, good evening.

[Al-Hariri] Good evening.

[Bilalian] Although you were not in your country, you have obviously heard about this afternoon's tragedy.

[Al-Hariri] Yes.

[Bilalian] What is your position this evening?

[Al-Hariri] It is really sad. It makes me think that what I have been saying since the beginning of the Israeli military operation is true: Israel is trying to kill civilians. They killed 94 people today and the problem cannot be solved by force.

[Bilalian] Prime minister, do you have the means to react to the present situation? What can you do?

[Al-Hariri] Our only chance is a political solution. I am in direct contact with President Chirac and the Americans. We are trying to find a solution to stop this massacre.

[Bilalian] Maybe you know that the Israeli prime minister said this evening that the operation will continue?

[Al-Hariri] Yes, I know. I saw him on CNN saying that he had no regrets and that the Israeli army had made no mistakes. I do not know how he could say such a thing. I thought he would say: We have made a mistake, I am sorry and it will not happen again. I was really shocked.

[Bilalian] As you know the Israelis say they would like you to have full control of your country, if only you could. They say that they will halt the shelling and even withdraw from Lebanon. But you cannot do that so far, can you?

[Al-Hariri] They must withdraw first. What do the Israelis want? They want to occupy part of our territory — 12 percent of Lebanon — they have problems because Hizballah attack and resist them and they would like the Lebanese army to wage war against Hizballah to make the Israeli occupation easier.

[Bilalian] Do you think the militias of the pro-Iranian Hizballah have no responsibility in this, as the Israelis say?

[Al-Hariri] I do not want to discuss Hizballah's political agenda. I have been saying since the very first day that, if we decide that Hizballah is really a problem, that problem cannot be solved with the use of force. There is a political solution to the problem.

[Bilalian] One more question, prime minister. Do you have any trust in the French and American peace plans presented so far?

[Al-Hariri] We trust France completely and I hope that France and the United States can make a joint proposal that we will be ready to discuss immediately.

[Bilalian] A very last question, Mr. Hariri. What do you say to Mr. Peres tonight?

[Al-Hariri] I will tell him that when you kill almost 100 civilians, including children, women, and elderly people, you cannot claim that you committed no mistakes. He should have the courage to say that he made a mistake that he regrets and that this will not happen again.

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[Bilalian] Thank you, prime minister.

[Al-Hariri] Goodbye.

Lebanon: UNSC Meets on Lebanon; UNIFIL Post Wiped Out

NC1804173496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1723 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editors desk: We have just learned that the UN Security Council [UNSC] has met to debate the current situation and the latest developments on Lebanon, particularly after the martyrdom of over 105 civilians in a camp for the displaced people of Qana.

Samir Mubarak, the Lebanese ambassador at the United Nations, has said that he received a message from the command of the UN forces stating that the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] post near Tyre has been wiped out as a result of the Israeli aggression. He accused Israel of attacking civilians.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Comments on Current Developments, Peace

NC1904063896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0450 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement before departing Damascus for Beirut, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stressed that the massacres that the Israeli army has committed against Lebanese civilians have completely exposed the falsity of Israel's claims and justifications of its continuing aggression against Lebanon and its goals—striking at the Lebanese infrastructure and everything that the Lebanese people have built since the civil war.

Al-Hariri said: It is only natural that Syria and Lebanon should consult and coordinate their efforts as fraternal countries, neighbors, and partners in their future, interests, and aspirations, and in their efforts for a fair, comprehensive, and honorable peace, a peace that will preserve dignity and restore land and rights and achieve security and stability for all peoples of the region. He noted that his consultations in Damascus dealt with all issues that concern the two countries and the proposals being put forward to end the aggression and return the peace process to its original track on the basis of the Madrid conference. He emphasized that Lebanon will adhere to all its rights in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425. He said that the aggression has increased Lebanon's will and determination to consolidate its national process for construction and development.

Al-Hariri noted that the aggression has revealed Israel's hostility and fear of Lebanon's economic and cultural role and its spite for the Lebanese plan to restore this role. He stressed that there can only be a political solution and that the aggression will not impose a solution. He said that the resistance is a result and not a cause. He said that the reason for what has happened and is happening is the Israeli occupation.

Al-Hariri said that both the French and U.S initiatives have positive aspects and they contain points that need amendment. He said: We are open to any proposal that will secure the cherished solution.

In the past few hours, al-Hariri has held high-level contacts with a number of concerned countries to complete his intensive moves to marshal support and backing for the Lebanese position.

Lebanon: Hizballah Responds to Qana 'Massacre' With More Rockets

NC1804175396 Paris AFP in English 1728 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, April 18 (AFP) — The Iranian-backed Hizballah announced that two of its fighters were killed Thursday [18 April] in Israeli raids as it fired more rockets at Israel in reply to "the terrible massacre" in Qana, where at least 94 people were killed by Israeli shelling.

The group said two of its fighters "who were confronting Zionist aggression" were killed in Israeli attacks, although it did say how or where. [sentence as received] It added that three of guerrillas have now been killed in Israel's eight-day campaign against the group in Lebanon.

A statement from the Shiite Moslem group said its armed wing, the Islamic Resistance, had fired more rockets "in response to the terrible massacre perpetrated by the Zionist army." It claimed it had fired Katyusha rockets at the northern Israeli town of Safad, 15 kilometers (10 miles) from the Lebanese border, as well as the Israeli towns of Kfar Yuval, Margaliyyot and Qyriat Shemona.

Israeli shells slammed into the UN base at Qana which was sheltering 500 Lebanese who had fled the fighting in the south killing at least 94 and wounding 100, among them four Fijian UN peacekeepers.

Earlier an Israeli strike on a village near al-Nabatiyah destroyed a house, killing a mother, her seven children and a cousin.

Thursday's deaths raised to 147 the number of people killed in Israel's military campaign. A total of 293 people have been injured. Apart from the three Hizballah

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guerrillas, two Lebanese soldiers and a Syrian army officer, those killed have all been civilians.

Lebanon: Hizballah Denies Firing Katyushas From Qana

NC1804180696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1757 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has denied claims that it fired katyusha rockets from Qana, which was the target of a terrible massacre that martyred and wounded more than 200 persons. Hizballah said that it will issue a statement later.

Lebanon: Islamic Group Threatens To Execute Ron Arad in '48 Hours'

NC1904064296 Paris AFP in English 0639 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, April 19 (AFP) — A militant Islamic group said Friday [19 April] it would execute in the next "48 hours" an Israeli pilot Ron Arad who was captured after his fighter plane was shot down over Lebanon in 1986.

Lebanon: Islamic Group Threatens U.S., Israel 'Targets' Worldwide

NC1904071096 Paris AFP in English 0658 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, April 19 (AFP) — A militant Islamic group said Friday [19 April] it would execute in the next "48 hours" Israeli airman Ron Arad, who was captured after his fighter plane was shot down over Lebanon in 1986.

The Organization of the Oppressed, an underground Islamic group in Lebanon, said: "We will in the next 48 hours execute the pilot Ron Arad. His execution will be filmed and we will provide a cassette to the international media."

"We are going to make spill the blood of the Jewish people and attack American and Israel targets around the world to avenge the massacres committed in south Lebanon over the last 24 hours," the group said in a telephone call.

At least 94 Lebanese were killed in a refugee compound at a UN base in Cana on Thursday when it was repeatedly shelled by Israeli artillery.

And nine members of the same family, including a mother and seven of her children, died when their house was hit in an air raid.

Israel has made repeated diplomatic efforts to obtain Arad's release since he was shot down while bombing south Lebanon. A Jewish American said last year that he had seen the navigator in an Iranian prison.

Lebanon: Radio Reports Israel's Peres Announces Cease-Fire

NC1804203796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2026 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has announced a 72-hour cease-fire at the request of U.S. President Bill Clinton to allow for negotiations.

Lebanon: Group Asks U.S., British Nationals To Leave Within 24 Hours

NC1904055996 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0540 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A person has called the Voice of Lebanon to say that in a statement bearing the number one, the [hitherto unknown] Mujahidin of Jabal 'Amil called on U.S. and British nationals in Lebanon to leave Lebanese territory within 24 hours as of 0900 [0600 GMT] this morning and before the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the region.

Lebanon: MENA Notes French-Egyptian Initiative for Cease-Fire

NC1704160096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1420 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 17 Apr (MENA)—Official Lebanese sources have stated that high-ranking Lebanese officials are still studying the U.S. and French ideas and proposals without formulating a final opinion on them yet.

These sources told the MENA correspondent in Beirut that the initiative submitted by French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette—which Egypt helped to draft—has been discussed in detail. The French foreign minister has not received Lebanon's final response to this initiative. He will return to Beirut carrying Israel's stance on this initiative, especially regarding the proposed draft for a cease-fire agreement.

These sources say that the French initiative calls for a cease-fire and an immediate halt to all Israeli military operations on Lebanese territory. Afterward, a Lebanese-Israeli agreement will be negotiated on preventing katyusha attacks on Israeli settlements or shelling of civilian areas by either side. Any agreement on the proposed security arrangements will be between the Lebanese and Israelis, with clear guarantees by Syria.

The sources have noted that the U.S. initiative, which has come as a reaction to the French-Egyptian initiative,

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has neither been rejected nor accepted yet, pending the outcome of the French foreign minister's talks with Israeli officials.

Lebanon: UN Delegate—Draft Resolution Submitted to Security Council

NC1704185996 London MBC Television in Arabic 1823 GMT 17 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Samir Mubarak, Lebanon's ambassador to the UN Security Council, in New York, by Antoine 'Awn in London—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Awn] Good evening Mr. Ambassador. When do you expect a Security Council plenary session to discuss the new draft resolution?

[Mubarak] The UN Security Council started a closed session half an hour ago. Egypt's delegate, the Arab representative on the council, submitted the Lebanese draft resolution with the sponsorship of Arab states at an informal closed meeting. The Lebanese document is now an official Security Council document. This draft is now known to all. We hope all Council members will be responsive to the unchanging Lebanese stance.

['Awn] Lebanon encountered U.S. partiality toward Israel at the UN Security Council a few days ago. What has changed to make you try again?

[Mubarak] We regard the UN Security Council as the highest world authority entrusted with security and peace. Therefore, we returned to the Council, hoping it will adopt a position that coincides with Lebanon's unchanging position.

Lebanon: French Foreign Minister—France 'Acting in Coordination' With U.S.

BR1804130996 Paris LE MONDE in French 18 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by Francoise Chipaux: "Washington And Paris 'Coordinate' Their Action To Stop the Conflict in Lebanon"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — On the seventh day of the Israeli operation "Grapes of Wrath" in Lebanon, the diplomats are endeavoring to secure a cease-fire that all the protagonists now appear to want. Having arrived in Beirut on the evening of Tuesday 16 April after talks in Israel and Syria, French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette would like to believe in a rapid solution. "I shall not leave the region before I have managed to put an end to operations," he told LE MONDE after talks with Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Birri. Mr. de Charette was due to leave for Israel again on Wednesday, taking specific proposals with him that he had already presented in Damascus and Beirut.

Like the U.S. plan submitted to Israel, Lebanon, and Syria on Tuesday, the French proposals are based on the informal agreement negotiated by Washington with the Syrian and Israeli leaders in July 1993 after a week of intensive Israeli bombardments of southern Lebanon, an agreement which was already intended to put an end to the activities of the fundamentalist Shi'ite militia Hizballah against Israel. "We must flesh out the two basic principles of the 1993 arrangement under the terms of which, on the one hand, Hizballah would not fire on Israeli territory and, on the other hand, Israel would not attack Lebanese civilians," Mr. de Charette explained. "The 1993 agreement was merely an arrangement by telephone between parties that did not exist. Today we must secure something which comes close to a written text approved by the Lebanese and Israeli Governments," he added. This agreement could include other parties, especially in a system of guarantees which it is premature to define, but the minister stressed that "France is ready to make its contribution." Since it is still possible that the situation might get out of hand, "we must find a procedure that will enable us to prevent disputes that will lead to a spiral of violence in the near future," he went on to say.

The French initiative "in no way contradicts the U.S. initiative, and France is acting in coordination with the United States," the French foreign minister said. This appraisal is shared by the White House, where one senior official stated on Tuesday: "We are in a phase where the two nations are sharing and coordinating the diplomatic initiative." Meanwhile, Lebanon — which above all wants to see the conflict brought to an end — "is disposed toward (examining) any idea aimed at bringing about a cease-fire," Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said.

Guarantees

The main point of the U.S. proposal, some terms of which were revealed by the Israeli television, would be the formal banning — guaranteed by Syria — of Hizballah rocket attacks on northern Israel and even the Israeli-occupied security zone in southern Lebanon. In return for the acceptance of this document by Damascus and Beirut, Israel would undertake to "immediately" terminate its operation in Lebanon. This plan has already been described as "hard to accept" by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

In fact in the current situation it is hard to see how Beirut and Damascus could accept a text that is in line with Israel's stated objective. In any case, Mr. al-Hariri,

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who described the desire expressed by the UN Security Council to see an end to the combat as "insufficient," counts on continuing his diplomatic efforts. Having returned on Tuesday evening from a tour that had taken him to Egypt, France, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, the prime minister was due to go to London on Wednesday. On Monday he said that he was "astonished at the support provided for the Israeli operation by Great Britain." However, an informed source indicated that London had reportedly slightly modified its assessment.

"France's Arab policy will be one of our diplomatic priorities," President Jacques Chirac stated a fortnight ago in Cairo after visiting Beirut. However, the first practical work that Mr. de Charette will do to obtain a cease-fire in Lebanon would appear to be extremely laborious, in an area that has been almost exclusively under U.S. influence since the Gulf War. While France's efforts are guaranteed the full support of Damascus and Beirut, the same clearly does not apply where Israel is concerned. Mr. de Charette runs the risk of finding it difficult to convince the Israeli leaders of the soundness of the French proposal, whereas — according to the information currently available — the U.S. proposal is reportedly much more favorable to them. But it is perhaps the complementary nature of the two initiatives that will result in a settlement of the crisis. A settlement, Beirut stresses, that must limit itself to stopping the current conflict, neither Damascus nor Beirut wanting to allow themselves to be sucked into arrangements that could jeopardize the peace negotiations with Israel which are currently interrupted.

While awaiting a diplomatic success, one week after the start of its operation which has killed 38 and wounded 169, mainly civilians, Israel is continuing its bombardment of Lebanon and Hizballah has not broken off its katyusha rocket attacks.

Lebanon: Birri Views Goals of Israeli Air Raids

NC1804162396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1420 GMT 18 Apr 96

[News conference by Lebanese Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri with unidentified correspondents at the Presidential Palace in B'abda; date not given; monitored in progress—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Birri] ...children representing the children of the whole world were martyred in the al-Nabatiyah massacre today. The martyred children were three, four, seven, eight, and 12 years old. This aggression targeted the sons of the south in Qana and the UN representative in Lebanon since 1972, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. The number of martyrs is at 68 so far, with over 120 wounded. The bombardment struck 100 Fijian soldiers and 250 displaced people who had taken shelter at that site. I think the number of martyrs will increase, because a number of people are critically wounded.

Just as Israel invaded Lebanon as far as Beirut in 1982 to dominate it, now Israel seeks to bring Lebanon to its knees and to tighten the siege on Syria, so that the last stronghold that is demanding its rights in the Arab region falls. Today is the day of Israeli massacres, which reminds us of the massacres of Dayr Yasin, al-'Abbasiyah, Ma'rakah, and all other massacres. These massacres are there for the American people to see, because we can no longer address the U.S. Administration, just as we cannot address the criminal Israeli Administration. Also, these massacres are for the United Nations to consider. Incidentally, the Israelis were not content with the bombardment and the resulting disaster. They immediately, and via the same warships that committed the crime, sought to shut down the highway at al-Awwali so that no ambulances or help could reach the site. Up to now no one can go to the south except via various twisted roads.

We can only assert our rights, steadfastness, patience, and firmness. And since the United States postponed the UN Security Council meeting for several days in order to dilute the issue, we now demand postponement of the Security Council meeting, if only for 24 hours, so that the whole world and all Security Council members can see these massacres for themselves.

I have spoken with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz and, earlier, with his excellency the president, to call for a meeting of the UN General Assembly. Thus Lebanon can be represented at the highest level, so that we can bring these crimes before the public opinion of the entire world.

[Correspondent] Mr. Speaker, it seems Israel has moved from the policy of scorched earth to that of exterminating people [words indistinct]

[Birri] I can tell you nothing other than that I insist on calling a meeting of the UN General Assembly, because Israel must be exposed to world public opinion. I want to assert from the presidential palace that whatever the sacrifices, we will never relinquish our rights. One of the most important goals of this aggression is to abolish Security Council Resolution 245 and bring Lebanon to its knees.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] What is the fate of the proposed initiatives?

[Birri] I do not think these initiatives will lead anywhere. If there is any hope in the French initiative, it is rejected by Israel. In fact, endorsing the U.S. initiative will

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involve more than one pitfall. One of these pitfalls is abolishing Resolution 245.

Lebanon: Buwayz Comments on Crisis After Meeting With Leaders

NC1804165896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1520 GMT 18 Apr 96

[News conference by Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by unidentified correspondents following a meeting with Lebanese leaders at B'abda Palace—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Buwayz] We discussed the situation with his excellency the president and the Chamber of Deputies speaker, with special emphasis on the resolution the Arab League adopted yesterday, voicing unreserved support for Lebanon and pledging to put its energy at our disposal. What happened is that the Lebanese calamity has perhaps brought the Arabs together for the first time since the Gulf war. Yesterday there was complete solidarity with the Lebanese stances, even by states that had taken steps toward normalization with Israel.

We believe that the continuation of the Israeli aggression will definitely affect what remains of the peace process. It will also effect the states that had started to believe that the process was possible.

[Correspondent] In view of the efforts being made by the Americans and the French, do you believe that the Lebanese issue, or the Israeli war against Lebanon, has been internationalized?

[Buwayz] If the political issue has not been internationalized yet, at least the record of the calamities that went down in history today has certainly been internationalized.

[Correspondent] What is the solution, in your view?

[Buwayz] We have clearly told all the parties—the United States, France, and the Arabs who got in touch with us—that we demand an immediate cease-fire and Israel's withdrawal from our occupied lands. Halting the aggression is a key demand that we made at the UN Security Council, even though we know the shortcomings of that Council. Today, after the calamities of Qana and al-Nabatiyah, some Security Council members are trying to hurry through a resolution which had been delayed for five days.

Today we demand a delay in issuing that resolution so that world public opinion can see clearly what is happening here.

At any rate, we expect that most states will submit to international pressure. Hence, we do not expect a clear resolution condemning the aggression. We are seriously thinking of resorting to the UN General Assembly to request an emergency and extraordinary meeting of the Assembly, which is assumed to be less susceptible to political pressure than the Security Council.

France tried today to establish common grounds in the European Union for submitting a new compromise. But it obtained very limited European support.

That is why we stressed our commitment to the Lebanese demand as it is, even though we know beforehand that the veto will be used and that pressure will be exerted. Let the world discover where the Security Council stands and where international justice lies.

[Correspondent] [question indistinct]

[Buwayz, in English] I would like to say congratulations for Peres. I think that today he registered in the humanitarian history of the world one of the highest scores. I think that he registered also a higher score than the Irgun and the Stern, and then what happened also during history as catastrophes. It is only what I can say.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, in light of the current status of the United Nations, which is under the control of one party, what is the use of resorting to that organization?

[Buwayz] I believe that resorting to the Security Council, despite the prior knowledge of its status, allows us to test it and reveal the Security Council's nature to all. Before we resorted to the Security Council we seriously considered whether Lebanon's demands would be supported or not and whether we should not refer to the Security Council so it could hide its impotence. We decided to expose this impotence. If there is impotence, then let it be exposed so that everyone can see it. If, contrary to what we believe, the Security Council still exists, then let it prove this to us.

[Correspondent] It is known that international contacts with the United Nations and the Security Council take a long time. The Israeli forces appear to be following a new policy of killing civilians and cutting roads. What [words indistinct] from the United Nations?

[Buwayz] It is very evident—though this has not been announced yet—that His Excellency French Minister de Charette, who is seeking a solution based on a cease-fire, visited Israel yesterday but could not meet with Peres. He met with Baraq, but he could not even get to the core of this issue. It became evident from Baraq that Israel is still gambling on continuing its terrorist operation to the end.

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I want to say here that Peres has yielded to the pressures of the extremists and the generals in Israel. The Likud Party has pushed into him into this quagmire. Though Lebanon has received painful blows, I stress that Peres will most certainly get into a quagmire from which he will not emerge unscathed.

Lebanon: Hizballah Vows Revenge for Israel's Lebanon 'Massacre'

LD1804174896 Tehran IRNA in English 1734 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, April 18, IRNA — In a statement here today, the Lebanese Hizballah vowed to take revenge of the Thursday [18 April] air raids by the Zionist state terrorists on the residential areas of Lebanon particularly on al-Nabatiyah town and on a refugee camp under protection of the UN Fijian peacekeeping forces in Qana village 13 km southeast the town of Tyre.

The statement indicated that the massive massacre of the defenseless innocent people of southern Lebanon who had taken shelter at the camps under the protection of the United Nations peace keeping forces is an open practice of state terrorism employed by the Zionists who also intentionally ignore internationally accepted human rights norms.

This morning, the Zionist aircrafts bombarded a building in al- Fawqa village at the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah town, and martyred 100 adults including a child and left a number of defenseless civilian wounded.

Lebanon: PFLP Militants Vow Revenge on Israel

NC1704154296 Paris AFP in English 1519 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sidon, Lebanon, April 17 (AFP) — A Palestinian militant group vowed Wednesday [17 April] to attack Israel "everywhere and by all means" in revenge for its offensive against Hizballah guerrillas in Lebanon.

A military leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said: "Israeli attacks on Lebanon target Hizballah's military wing and the Palestinian people, and we will respond not only in Lebanon but everywhere where we come up against Israel."

"We will take part in this battle using all means," Abu-Ahmad Fu'ad added in a statement.

The Israeli offensive against the Iranian-backed Hizballah has left 38 dead and around 170 wounded in Lebanon, almost all of them civilians. A Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon has also been targeted.

The Damascus-based PFLP, which is fiercely opposed to the PLO's autonomy accords with Israel, has in the past joined Hizballah in attacking Israel's occupied "security zone" in south Lebanon.

Lebanon: Birri Leaves for Damascus; de Charette To Visit 20 Apr

NC1904095796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0939 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri left the Ba'abda palace a short while ago for Damascus to hold talks with Syrian officials.

Meanwhile, the meeting continues between President Ilyas al-Hirawi and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Our correspondent at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that French Foreign Minister Herves de Charette will not visit Beirut today but tomorrow. De Charette is expected to visit the Syrian capital today.

Lebanon: Iranian Envoy Interviewed on Reasons for Israeli Attacks

LD1804122496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Homayun 'Alizadeh by unidentified correspondent on 18 April — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Hello, Mr. 'Alizadeh. Please tell us the goal of the Zionist regime in its recent acts of aggression against Lebanon?

['Alizadeh] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. It seems that one of the important objectives of the recent operations, which have brought southern Lebanon and many other parts of the country under fire, is connected to the outcome of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference and its subsequent committees. As you are aware, after the events that occurred inside occupied Palestine, the United States and Israel have tried hard to gather various countries to take measures in the whole region, under the pretext of combating terrorism.

They encountered some difficulties in the conference. They were unable to fully reach their goals, particularly because of the resistance put up by certain European countries at the conference against the Israelis and the Americans.

After the Sharm al-Shaykh conference it was suggested that in the continuation of efforts to crush the Islamists in Palestine, Israel should target Lebanon and set it ablaze to deal blows to the Islamic Resistance forces,

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who continue to maintain a large front against Israel in southern Lebanon.

Regarding the second and third objectives of the operations for Israel, one could say that the internal issues in Israel have played a principal role in the matter. At present there are two conflicts in progress inside Israel — that is until the operation. One is the hot election debate between the Labor Party led by Shim'on Peres and Likud led by Netanyahu. There is about a month and a half left before the Israeli elections and they, particularly the Labor Party, seek to capitalize on the operation staged in southern Lebanon to increase its chances in the elections.

That is the basis of many attempts and actions by Israel at present. Even in the peace solution it proposes, to which I will refer later, it shows its hand. The main slogan of the Labor Party — which was peace, as it were — has now been changed into the maintenance of security, after the events inside Palestine over the past few weeks. In fact, the tendency toward hardline and extremist views has increased in the Labor Party. It is trying to rally public opinion around using the issue of security and saying only the Labor Party can maintain it for the Israeli people. That has become the election slogan of Peres. The operations in southern Lebanon have been staged within that same framework.

The third objective, which is related to the other objectives, is to satisfy a need for a second confrontation, to which I alluded earlier. That is to say a confrontation between the politicians and the military leadership within Israel. This goes back to the Tammuz understanding of June 1993, that is around two and a half years ago. During this period, this understanding had taken away from the Israeli military its power and authority to do what it wanted in Lebanon.

However, Israel has repeatedly violated this understanding at different junctures in a bid to appease and satisfy the military. It seems that at the present time, that is to say on the eve of the Israeli elections on 29 May, Peres has been forced to succumb to the increasing pressures exerted by the military. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Spokesman—We Will Not Let Israel Kill Our People

MS1904082796 London Channel 4 Television Network in English 1800 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Interview with Muammad 'Ubayd, director general Lebanese Ministry of Information, in Beirut, by Jon Snow in the studio on 18 April — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Snow] First I asked him about Israeli claims that Hizballah was using the area to launch their rocket attacks.

['Ubayd] Actually Hizballah wasn't operating very close to that area as we knew. It was in a valley around that area, but the Israeli's they can see clearly that area, and they shell the [word indistinct] battalion of the UN forces. I think that the Israeli's are targeting the civilians now. It's now the third massacre. The first one was around Tyre in al-Mansuri. The second one this morning, this early morning, in al-Nabatiyah, and this third one — I don't believe so and nobody could believe that the Israeli's are not knowing that these civilians are found there.

[Snow] What is the Lebanese Government trying to achieve tonight then?

['Ubayd] The Lebanese Government and the speaker of the parliament actually, is trying to call the General Assembly of the UN, to have a meeting, a direct meeting, maybe after 24 hours, just stop Israel from this aggression, to stop this war in Lebanon and against the civilians in Lebanon.

[Snow] But then in reply what is Lebanon going to do about the Israeli demand that rocket attacks from Hizballah into northern Israel stop?

['Ubayd] As the Lebanon Government said before this is an excuse. And we all believe that. Hizballah is the reason, Hizballah is part of the Lebanese resistance. Hizballah is the result, not the reason. The reason is that the Israeli occupation in the Lebanese territories. When we just, or enforce the Israelis to withdraw from the Lebanese territories there will be no need for a resistance — Lebanese or for Hizballah any more.

[Snow] Do you think that what has happened today represents a turning point in all this?

['Ubayd] We can say that we hope that the international community could move now and enforce Israel to withdraw from our territory and implement the 425 resolution and to let us live in peace. I think that we'll have many mediators, many French and American are trying to do something, are having many initiatives, are trying to talk to us, to the Syrians, to the Israelis, but

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the main point, we won't let the Israeli's any more kill our people.

Lebanon: Hizballah Spokesman—Conditions for Cease-Fire 'Changed'

BR1904094096 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish 19 Apr 96 pp 1-2

[Report by Juan Carlos Gumucio: "Israeli Bombs Kill 94 Refugees in UN Headquarters in Lebanon"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] If there was general consensus in Lebanon last night that the conflict had now acquired a new and unexpected dimension, it still remains to be seen whether its seriousness will force a search for mediation toward a truce or whether, on the contrary, it will harden Hizballah's campaign. Muhammad Fniesh, one of the eight Hizballah parliamentarians who is also a high member of the party's political council, declared yesterday morning to EL PAIS that the guerilla fighters would never lay down arms "as long as there is an Israeli soldier left on Lebanese territory." Moreover, a spokesperson for the militia in the outskirts of Tyre, who only wished to identify himself as Abu Ahmad, said that the Qana killing had changed the conditions for a possible ceasefire.

"We cannot tolerate that the Jews, with the blessing of the United States, massacre our men, women, and children, and live quietly afterwards, as if nothing had happened today, yesterday, or in the past years," he said. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Citizens Urged Not To Use Bridge Leading South

NC1804122796 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1205 GMT 18 Apr 96

["Communique No. 1 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following Hizballah's continued firing of katyushas on Israel, and on the basis of the new security formula, the Israeli navy began operating in the Jisr al-Awwali, around half an hour ago, with the aim of preventing Hizballah's terrorists from arriving in the south and transporting weapons and ammunitions in their vehicles to the south.

The Israeli army announces that any vehicle or means of transport travelling south will be attacked and citizens are asked not to use the Jisr al Awwali. Anyone trying to travel south through this bridge will be doing so at his own risk. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: SLA Radio Warns Lebanese in South To Move Northward

NC1904065296 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0626 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 1 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To the population of the south: The terrorist Hizballah militiamen last night continued to open fire from among civilians at the border area and the civilian settlements in northern Israel. These militiamen are using you, your women, and children as human shields in anticipation of the Israeli army reaction.

O citizens, the Israeli army is continuing its operations against Hizballah saboteurs, who, by firing from residential areas, are exposing the people who have remained in these towns and villages to a grave danger. Accordingly, those who have not left their homes until now must leave immediately and keep away from the south. Those who have not done this yet after being warned by the Israeli army and have remained in the areas where Hizballah members are present expose themselves to the danger of death. By remaining near Hizballah saboteurs, its bases, offices, equipment, vehicles, and activists you will be exposed to the Israeli army reaction. You must be aware that the roads to the north are open but the roads to the south are completely closed. Any vehicle travelling southward will be attacked. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Radio Warns Lebanese Against Using al-Awwali Bridge

NC1904070196 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0645 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 2 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following Hizballah's firing of rockets, the Israeli navy has decided to carry out its operations in the direction of the al-Awwali bridge area to prevent the arrival of Hizballah saboteurs in the south and their vehicles and weapons. Any vehicle that arouses suspicion will be attacked. Civilians must refrain from leaving southward via the al-Awwali bridge. Anyone going southward via this road exposes himself to death. He who forewarns is excused.

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Lebanon: Communique Says Israeli Operations To Resume at Noon

NC1904074196 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0715 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 3 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Further to communique No. 1 for today, the Israeli Army will resume its operations at 1200 [0900 GMT] in the following villages, townships, and cities: al-Nabatiyah, Tyre, Khirbat Silm, al-Sawwanah, Bi'r al-Salasil, and Kafr Dunin.

The citizens who remained in the villages and townships that were warned in the past have to leave until 1200 today.

Let all our audience know that what the Voice of the South broadcasts on the Israeli army operations in the areas, villages, and townships does not mean that the matter is limited to these areas. The Israeli army undertakes its operations wherever there are Hizballah saboteurs. No place is safer than another. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Communique Warns More Israeli Operations at 1000 GMT

NC1904082096 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 4 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Once again, and in addition to communique No. 1 for today, the Israeli army will undertake its operations as of 1300 [1000 GMT] in the areas of Jibshit, 'Adshit, al-Qulaylah, and al-Sama'iyah, north of al-Qulaylah.

The citizens who remain in these villages will have to leave until 1300 today.

Let it be known to all our audience that what the Voice of the South broadcasts about the Israeli army operations in the areas, villages, and townships does not mean that the matter is restricted to these places. The Israeli army undertakes its operations wherever there are Hizballah saboteurs. No place is safer than another. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Communique Says Israeli Navy Operations To Start 0900 GMT

NC1904085196 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0824 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 5 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Further to what was announced in communique No. 2 for today, the Israeli navy will resume its operations in the area of Jisr al-Awwali as of 1200 [0900 GMT].

All citizens should refrain from heading toward the south. Whoever does this endangers his life at his own risk. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Communique Blames Continued Operations on Hizballah

NC1904092696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0903 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 6 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To the inhabitants of the south: The tragic events that occurred yesterday, events which the state of Israel regrets, have once again proved that the sons of the south have become hostages in the hands of Hizballah, which insists on using you, in total indifference, as human shields while it fires katyushas at the border region and northern Israel from within your villages, from among your homes and near the centers of the UN emergency forces. Its goal is to save itself and hurt victims among you.

Israel's request to you to leave your homes meant only to spare you risk, as civilians, something Israel does not want for you.

O sons of the south, after a cease fire is reached and after Hizballah stops its terrorist activities, you will return to your villages and townships and resume your normal lives. However, as long as a cease-fire has not been reached and as long as katyushas are falling in the border region and northern Israel, the fighting will continue in accordance with the new security equation: Namely, unless peace prevails in the border region and northern Israel, it will not prevail in south Lebanon, or even Beirut and Ba'labakk. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Radio Announces Areas of Upcoming Israeli Operations

NC1904100696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0934 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 7 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Pursuant to Communique No. 1 for today, beginning at 1400 today [1100 GMT] the Israeli Army will carry out operations against Hizballah in the following towns and villages: al-Qulaylah area, al-Qulaylah, al-Mansuri, al-Hinniyah, al-Sama'iyah, al-Bazuriyah, Majdal Zun, Zibqin, Siddiqin, 'Aytit, Jabal al-Butm, the Khirbat Silm area, Khirbat Silm, Majdal Silm, Shaqra, Qabrikha, Tulin, al-Ghanduriyah,

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al-Sultaniyah, Bi'r al-Salasil, Jumayjimah, Safad al-Battikh, the Jibshit-al-Nabatiyah area, 'Aqrabin, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, Yuhmur, Kafr Tibnit, Shukin, Mayfadun, Jibshit, 'Atshit, Kafr Sir, Qa'qa'iyat al-Jisr, al-Nabatiyah, Kafr Rumman, 'Arab Salim, the Yatar area, Yatar, Haddatha, Bra'shit, Kafra, 'Ayta al-Zutt, Tibnin, and Harish.

Those who have remained in these towns and villages must leave by 1400 today. Those who remain will expose themselves to the danger of death. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Communique to Shiites Reiterates Peaceful Intentions

NC1904103396 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1015 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 8 for Today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] O sons of the Shiite sect in Lebanon: You lived for years near your Jewish neighbors on the joint borders. Life proceeded regularly and peacefully and ties of good neighborliness prevailed.

Since terrorist organizations entered your region, starting with the Palestinians through Hizballah, calamities and ordeals have been inflicted on you and the peace has been disturbed in this region.

The state of Israel has sought and still is seeking a peace agreement with Lebanon. It hoped Lebanon would be among the first states to sign a peace agreement with it, since Israel has no ambitions in the Lebanese lands, as it repeatedly announced.

Regrettably enough, this has not been achieved, because Lebanon has always fallen under pressure from foreign forces and could not make its decisions freely.

Israel is interested in restoring normalcy to south Lebanon. But solving the problem of the south can only come by vanquishing terrorism and crimes against men and children by using them as human shields to cover up terrorist acts. The interests of all the parties can only be guaranteed by reaching a political agreement after negotiations to be held in a climate of mutual respect, so that we can proceed together with confident steps toward a new era in which calm, peace, economic prosperity, and a normal and peaceful life prevail. The real solution for the situation in which the people of the south are living lies in all this.

Lebanon: Communique Gives Ultimatum to Inhabitants To Leave

NC1904113096 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1122 GMT 19 Apr 96

["Communique No. 9 for Today]

[FBIS Translated Text] Further to communique No. 3, the Israeli army will resume its operations as of 1600 [1300 GMT] in the following places: al-Nabatiyah, Tyre, Khirbat Silm, Bi'r al-Salasil, and Dunin.

All the citizens who have not left these places must leave as quickly as possible. Whoever fails to do so will be risking his own life. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Israelis Bombard Southern Areas

NC1904060496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0549 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editors desk: The Israeli acts of aggression are continuing. According to the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Tibnin, the villages of Dayr al-Salasil, Khirbat Silm, and Majdal Silm are now coming under Israeli artillery barrage. Meanwhile, Israeli military aircraft are flying over the central sector.

The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY in al-Nabatiyah reported that shells are falling on Haruf and Zibdin. Earlier, the villages of 'Atshit, Shukin, and Jibshit came under artillery bombardment.

Lebanon: Israeli Artillery Shelling, Amal Attacks Reported

NC1904063096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0607 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This is just in from the news desk: The correspondent of the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY in the central sector has reported that the occupation forces' artillery has been shelling the town of Tibnin with fragmentation bombs since 0900 [0600 GMT]. Minutes earlier, the occupation forces shelled the town of Dayr Ntar, the hills of al-Sultaniyah, Khirbat Silm, and Majdal Silm.

The Amal Movement announced that in revenge for the massacres of al-Nabatiyah and Qana, Amal groups carried out a series of operations against occupation posts in al-Dabshah, Qal'at al-Shaqif, 'Ali al-Tahir, and al-Burj, scoring direct hits.

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Lebanon: More on Israeli Air Raids, Artillery Bombardment

NC1904081296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0705 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At about 0930 [0630 GMT] today, Israeli military aircraft raided for the second time today the al-M'alliyah and al-Qulaylah areas south of Tyre. The Israeli aircraft fired two missiles at the area while Israeli helicopters were flying low over the sea. In addition, the Israeli forces directed an artillery barrage at al-M'alliyah, al-Mansuri, Zibdin, al-Qulaylah, and the al-Mansuri plain from the al-Hamra' area to al-'Amiriyah. The towns of al-Sultaniyah and Tibnin and the adjacent villages came under violent artillery barrage while Israeli aircraft were flying over the area. Shortly after 0900, the Israeli artillery pounded the town of Tibnin using fragmentation bombs. Earlier, the town of Dayr Ntar, al-Sultaniyah hills, Khirbat Silm, and Majdal Silm came under an artillery barrage. Yatar and Kafra, particularly the area around the mosque, came under concentrated artillery barrage.

In the western al-Biqa', the Israeli enemy renewed its acts of aggression against the area north of Hasbayya, directing incendiary phosphorous tank fire at Birkat Mimis, the al-Dahr hills, the al-Hasbani river basin, the vicinity of Marj al-Zuhur, and the olive groves in the area, causing fires.

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Syria: 'Massacre' in Lebanon, U.S. Diplomatic Moves Reported

JN1804193296 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the eighth day of its aggression against Lebanon, Israel committed a brutal massacre in the southern town of Qana. According to the latest casualty toll, more than 100 Lebanese citizens were killed, including a large number of children, women, and old people. In addition, more than 150 people were injured, including a number of personnel of the Fijian contingent deployed as part of the international troops in southern Lebanon. [passage omitted]

The Israeli aggression against Lebanon continued for the eighth consecutive day and so did diplomatic efforts. French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette met with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in Tel Aviv today. The Israeli prime minister asked that French positions on the current situation in Lebanon be coordinated with the U.S. Administration. Peres said Israel does not pin great hopes on the French initiative. Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq yesterday rejected the French initiative.

U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns said French and U.S. experts will meet later today to coordinate peace efforts on Lebanon. Burns said Paris suggested specifics that are, in essence, in harmony with U.S. ideas. However, the French suggestions are different, one way or another. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is scheduled to arrive in Israel on 20 April to discuss developments resulting from the Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

Syria: Al-Asad, Lebanon's al-Hariri Discuss Joint Efforts

JN1804210596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at 1615 [1315 GMT] today. The meeting was attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Discussions dealt with the current situation in Lebanon in light of the ongoing Israeli escalation of aggressive acts against the territory, people, and economic facilities of Lebanon. The talks also dealt with the contacts and efforts the two countries have made. They also reviewed the joint steps they have taken at the Arab and international levels and the international efforts to end the current situation created by Israel.

Syria: Al-Hariri Sees 'Positive Points' in French, U.S. Plans

JN1904061096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Before leaving Damascus, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stressed that the massacres that Israel committed against the Lebanese civilians reveal the falseness of the excuses that Israel has used to justify its constant aggression against Lebanon.

Al-Hariri added: The objectives of this aggression are now evident. Israel wants to destroy the infrastructure and what the Lebanese people have been able to build in the years since the civil war.

Answering journalists' questions, al-Hariri said: It is natural for Syria and Lebanon to consult with each other and coordinate their positions as two sisterly countries and partners in fate, interests, aspirations, and efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just, and honorable peace that will preserve dignity, ensure the return of territory, and achieve security and stability for all people of the region.

Al-Hariri noted that his discussions in Lebanon touched on all issues of concern to the two countries, as well as the proposals to end the aggression and return the peace process to its original path, in accordance with the principles of the Madrid Conference.

He stressed that Lebanon adheres to its full rights, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425. He said the aggression has strengthened Lebanon's determination to buttress its national development and reconstruction march, particularly because the aggression has revealed the extent of Israel's animosity toward and resentment of Lebanon's economic and cultural role.

Al-Hariri stressed that the solution must be a political one and that the aggression, regardless of how savage it may get, cannot impose a solution. He also said the resistance is a result and not a cause. Occupation is the cause for what has happened and is happening now.

Al-Hariri said both the French and U.S. proposals have positive points, but also include certain points that need to be amended. He said: We are receptive to any proposal that will ensure the arrival at the desired solution.

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Syria: Radio Reports Clinton's Call For Immediate Cease-Fire

JN1904065696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. President Bill Clinton demanded an immediate cease-fire between Israel and the Lebanese national resistance. Upon arriving in Russia, President Clinton said that the events clearly show the importance of ending the current acts of violence in Lebanon. Clinton said he instructed Secretary of State Warren Christopher to go to the Middle East in an attempt to mediate the crisis. Clinton said he hopes that the Israeli shelling will not derail the peace process. He said that negotiations can be resumed in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace. Clinton stressed, once again, the need to begin an immediate cease-fire.

Syria: U.S. 'Bias' Said To 'Provoke' Israeli Attacks on Lebanon

JN1804153896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1136 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] For the eighth consecutive day, Israeli terrorism continues its barbaric fury across Lebanon's skies, land, and sea, killing children, women, and the elderly, and destroying homes, cities, villages, schools, hospitals, factories, farms, boats, and all means of making a living. The number of Lebanese citizens who have been forced by the fire of Israeli state terrorism from Bra'shit, Jibshit, al-Nabatiyah, Tyre, Yatar, Majdal Salm, and dozens of Lebanese cities, villages, and towns has risen to more than 500,000, with hundreds and even thousands of displaced persons being added to that figure every minute. Meanwhile, the countries of the world and some influential powers that have talked about international legitimacy, the new world order, and the gravity of violating international law and rebelling against UN resolutions are still listening to the voice of the terrorist Israeli Government warning defenseless Lebanese citizens to leave their homes and land and repeating the cliche: "He who forewarns is excused," as if by doing this, hymns of peace, good, and love are being sung.

These influential world powers are still listening to all this and even to senior Israeli terrorists who announce that this criminal fury is only the beginning. The world powers have not broken their silence, which effectively gives a green light to Israeli terrorism and provides it with political protection. We do not believe that any observer has any doubt about the causes of this aggression — this state terrorism by Israel— and the Israeli war crimes, especially since these observers have witnessed unequivocal evidence during, after, and on the fringes of the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting.

At the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting, the U.S. Administration justified the closure imposed by Israel on the occupied territories as a security measure, while in fact the closure is a flagrant violation of the Geneva and the Hague Conventions, which protect occupied territories against the excesses of the occupying force in wartime. A strategic U.S.-Israeli alliance emerged at that meeting, an alliance that wants to place Israel above all the agreements that ban the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, even if peace is achieved in the Middle East. This contradicts peace, and even the very idea of peace. Meanwhile, we should not forget the strategic alliance between Turkey and Israel. According to the Israeli press, this agreement became effective on 16 April, when Israeli warplanes landed at Turkish military airbases to exercise the activities mentioned in the agreement.

In view of this U.S. bias toward Israel and in view of these U.S. stands, gifts, and practices that will definitely provoke, if not authorize, Israel to commit aggression, observers may wonder: Why should Israel not persist in unrestrained terrorism?

Israeli terrorism has torn apart the Israeli prime minister's image as the leader of moderation in Israel. His aggression against Lebanon, which has entered its eighth day, has removed his image of moderation and concern about peace. Even more serious on the Israeli side is the observers' consensus that the Peres government, allegedly described as moderate, is competing with the extremist Israeli parties to appease the instincts of aggression within Israeli society through the aggression being committed by the Israeli Government and Army in Lebanon.

In this case, it is fair for Arab citizens to wonder what kind of peace Israel wants. How will the Arab citizens trust someone who views this official Israeli terrorism as an ideal, motivated by nothing but the instincts of expansion, racism, ambition, and greed to usurp others' rights and territory?

For the last eight days, the world has observed the debris and ruins that were once a green, prosperous homeland in southern Lebanon. We have the right to wonder about the political results of this Israeli state terrorism in Lebanon. This Israeli terrorism showers Lebanese citizens and territory with volleys of death, dealing a blow to international law, international legitimacy, and the ethics of war that protect civilians, noncombatants, and the wounded who were bombed by Israeli warplanes while inside ambulances.

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Observers may be wondering what remains of the peace process and what remains of the role of an honest, impartial partner, which the U.S. Administration said that it was assuming in the peace process. There are many unavoidable questions that require responsible and speedy action by the international community and its influential powers.

Syria: French Foreign Minister To Arrive in Damascus 19 Apr

JN1904100096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As part of the French and European efforts and while Israel continues its barbaric aggression against Lebanon, French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette continues his shuttle tour of the region with the aim of ending the Israeli aggression.

After meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Peres in Tel Aviv, De Charette announced that he will travel to Damascus to meet with Syrian officials today. Meanwhile, the Lebanese information minister announced that de Charette will arrive in Beirut today for talks with Lebanese officials. [passage omitted]

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets Target Kabul; No Casualties

LD1804191696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group has again fired rockets into residential areas of Kabul city. BAKHTAR reports that today's rockets did not cause any loss of life but destroyed one house.

Afghanistan: Taleban Fighters Killed in Paktia Clash

LD1804192296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a face-to-face clash in Gardez city [capital of Paktia Province], fighters attached to 'Abdol Latif Mansur [ex-governor of Paktia Province] have killed a large number of fighters from the Taleban group.

Reports received by BAKHTAR say that the fighting between the two sides flared up after the Taleban group began committing atrocities against the local people and against all factions of the mojahedin, including the men attached to 'Abdol Latif Mansur. During this fighting a large number of the Taleban's men were killed or injured.

It should be noted that similar serious fighting erupted once before in this province between 'Abdol Latif Mansur's men and the Taleban group, and a large number of the Taleban group were killed.

India

India: 2 Persons Killed in Bomb Blast in Andhra Pradesh

BK1804160496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Andhra Pradesh, a former MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly], Mr. P. Sesha Reddy, and his associate were killed in a bomb blast in Gonegandla village in Kurnool District this evening. According to police, a rival group hurled the bomb on the victims when they were on an election campaign. Two persons were seriously injured.

India: Total of 417 Militants Surrender to Police in Assam

BK1804092796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Assam, 417 ultras including 30 council members belonging to Cachar Hill People's Federation activists, surrendered to the director general of police at Silchar this morning. They also handed over to him a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Our Silchar correspondent reports that the activists belong to 14 different tribal groups which were operating in various parts of Assam, Manipur, and Mizoram for the last three years.

India: Commentary Views Efforts To Resolve Afghan Problem

BK1804122596 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Commentary by Dr. C.K. Bandopadhyay]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dejected by the United Nations' failure to bring about rapprochement among various Afghan factions, the Afghanistan Government has started direct negotiations with Hezb-e Eslami leader Golboddin Hekmatyar and Afghan warlord General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam to restore peace in the strife-torn nation. Emissaries have also been sent to Taleban leaders to enter into negotiations, so that a consensus could be reached in ending the ongoing civil war. Afghan Foreign Minister Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i and other top government functionaries have said that President Rabbani is prepared to travel to headquarters of the various Afghan factions to work out modalities of peace in Afghanistan with their leaders. He has even expressed his desire to share power with Taleban and other factions so that those hostilities are ended in the country where more than 1.5 million people have died.

The Rabbani government feels that the UN has done little to end civil war in the country. Secondly, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, the UN envoy to Afghanistan, is facing health problems and is not in a position to devote more time for the peace initiative. Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, top leader of the Afghanistan Government, has admitted that negotiations with Hekmatyar have already started. Though no final agreement has been reached so far, the talks have made considerable headway. Mr. Mas'ud, who had fought against the Soviet occupation, said that the solution to the conflict is not war; it has to be settled through peaceful means.

The talks are being held directly between close associates of Hekmatyar and Mr. Mas'ud and President Rabbani. Some reports have even suggested that nearly 2,500 guerrillas of Hezb-e Eslami have joined the government forces to launch the offensive against the Taleban, who are hardly 35 km away from the Kabul city. Similarly, talks are also being held with the Dostam faction, but the Afghan Government officials admitted that Gen. Dostam became somewhat reluctant to resume dialogue following his recent visit to Islamabad. He is

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under the influence of Pakistan. The government, however, still hopes that Gen. Dostam would also respond to the offer of a peaceful settlement through negotiations. They also claimed that channels of communications are also open with the Taleban leaders at various levels.

The Rabbani government has also intensified its diplomatic campaign to seek support of various Western and Islamic countries for the peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict. Ms. Robin Raphel, U.S. assistant secretary of state for South Asia, had visited India and Pakistan sometime back to explore possibilities of finding a peaceful settlement to the civil war. She is at present on the tour of Islamabad and Kabul once again to find out some rapprochement among the various Afghan factions. Mr. Hank Brown, U.S. senator, also visited Kabul sometime back to seek and ascertain views of various groups on the political situation.

The government officials maintain that if the peace talks fail, the government forces may be forced to launch an offensive against the Taleban and other factions to drive them out. A major area of Afghanistan is under the control of the Taleban and Gen. Dostam faction. The Rabbani government controls only seven districts of the war-torn country.

Iran has also supported the ongoing talks between Afghan Government and the opposition wings, viewing them as the foundation of gaining access to mutual understanding. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for the Asia-Pacific Affairs Mr. Ala'eddin Borujerdi said in Kabul on Monday [15 April] that negotiations were the only way to achieve peace in Afghanistan.

India is deeply interested in peace in the neighboring country. Not only will it end the prolonged tragedy of millions of people of this strife-torn country, but it will also take away from Pakistan the excuse of receiving sophisticated arms from the U.S. to contain militancy in its territory. In fact, Pakistan has been using these arms for supporting militancy in Jammu and Kashmir state of India.

India: Foreign Minister Denies Signing Arms Deal With Russia

BK1904015696 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 18 Apr 96 p 5

[UNI report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Wednesday [17 April] that India has not signed any arms deal with Russia as alleged by the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP].

Mr Mukherjee told reporters here that it was a totally baseless allegation which could only damage the country's image. "It was very, very unfortunate and such allegations should not be raised to earn political benefit," he pointed out.

The country's security should always receive top priority and one should not compromise with it, the External Affairs Minister said.

The BJP had alleged that the Union Government had signed an arms deal with Russia to purchase eight multi-crore [one crore is equal to 10 million] Su-30MK fighter aircraft worth Rs[rupees] 1200 crore. Rs five hundred crore had already been paid as advance against the purchase of the aircraft, the BJP had alleged.

Mr Mukherjee informed that Pakistan had purchased many ring magnets from China.

"We have specific instances and proofs that Islamabad managed to get these ring magnets from Beijing in a clandestine way, which was, however, leaked before the world," Mr Mukherjee said.

India: 'High Prices' Hindering Purchase of Russian Fighter

BK1904020096 Madras THE HINDU in English 18 Apr 96 p 11

[Report by Atul Aneja]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Possible purchases of state-of-the art Su-30 fighter planes from Russia could give New Delhi a formidable ability to counter arch foe, Pakistan, rapidly amassing a range of sophisticated arms.

India is also negotiating procurement of sophisticated self-propelled guns from Moscow, but has not signed a contract because of high price, a top defence source said here.

Serious defence negotiations between India and Russia began in October 1994, after an apex New Delhi-Moscow consultative body of key Defence Ministry officials was formed, under the framework of a Military Technology Cooperation (MTC) Agreement. The Defence Secretary, Mr. K.A. Nambiar, and the Director-General of the Russian arms trading arm, Rosvoorouzhenie, Mr. Alexander Kotelkin head the group. A wish list of possible weaponry required by India was presented to Moscow, to be further negotiated by this body.

"What India gave to Russia was a wish list, an indication of intent of hardware on which negotiations could continue. In that sense it was not a contract and neither did it bar India from purchasing comparable items form third country sources. It is unfortunate that the list has been quantified to over $3.5 billion and projected as the

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value of contracts already signed by India with Russia. This is misleading", an official source said.

According to sources, the multipurpose Su-30 will more than match the Mirage-2000-5 which Pakistan intends acquiring from Paris, besides giving an unprecedented edge in carrying out deep strikes in hostile territory.

For the first time, India will be able to intercept targets at a distance of 120 kms, using the medium range missile on the plane.

"So far, India has what are called Beyond Visual Range Missiles. Both the MiG-29 and the Mirage-2000 with India can target between 40 kms to 60 kms using these projectiles. But the Su-30 will substantially upgrade interception, necessary as warfare in the region goes hi-tech", an Indian Air Force (IAF) source said.

For the first time, air to air refuelling will allow the plane to fly non-stop for 10 hours, at nearly two Mach speed, covering a distance of over 7,000 king. [as published] In comparison, the much slower Jaguar planes (1.6 Mach), specialising in deep strikes with India have less than half of the Su-30s flying range.

The Su-30 outperforms the Jaguar in weaponry as well. The Russian built plane can carry 8,000 kgs. of weapons, nearly twice what the Jaguar can do.

IAF Approval

"The Su-30 is simply the best in the business in its class. It is an improvement over the Su-27, which already has set 17 world records. The only remotely comparable plane is the expensive U.S. built F-15, which India nevertheless will not get", a source said.

Negotiations on the Su-30 began on the basis of the Air Staff Requirement (ASR) of the IAF. "Acquisition of a Multi-role Combat Aircraft with Deep Strike Capabilities" has been prioritised by the IAF as part of the VIII Defence Plan (1992-97), says the fourth report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence.

The IAF approved the plane after flying it and paying several visits to the plant site at Irkutsk. "Price negotiations began only last year after the IAF teams technically approved the plane", a Defence Ministry source here said. The former IAF chief has also visited Irkutsk and had personally flown the aircraft. "Initially we sought some modifications to suit our environment to which the Russians agreed."

Defence Ministry teams were also looking a possible licence production of the aircraft after modifying the facilities at Nasik. "Machines in the Nasik plant producing the MiG-27 planes could be reprogrammed to produce inputs for the Su-30. After all, there is a commonality of the materials used in the MiG-27 and the Su-30", a source here said. The IAF wants a deep strike multi role plane to last another 20 years.

The IAF evaluating teams were also drawing on the experience of the Russian users. The Su-30MK, designed in 1991 was demonstrated at air shows in Berlin and Farnborough in 1994. "It is misleading to say that the Su-30 MK exists only on the drawing board", a source here said.

The IAF could be the first overseas user of the Su-30, evidence of the resurrection of a special relationship between New Delhi and Moscow. During the Soviet era, India was the first customer outside the Warsaw pact to have got the MiG-29 planes, a unmatchable classic from the stables of the Mikoyan Design Bureau.

India is yet to sign a contract with Moscow for the Self Propelled guns, a move able artillery gun mounted on an engine driven wheeled or tracked chassis. "The SP guns offered by Russia are of 152 mm caliber. We want guns to fire the indigenously produced 155 mm shells. The operational costs on non-standardised ammunition goes up substantially", a source here said.

Russian Prices 'Too High'

During negotiations last month, Russia agreed to fix a 155 mm. gun, but wanted India to pay for the required changes in its Russian plant. According to diplomatic sources, the visiting team argued that India should pay for the assembly line. But according to a Defence Ministry source, "the Russians are charging too high a price for the modifications and this has prevented us from signing a contract. But, we are hopeful that the Russians will quote a lower price", a source said.

According to an army source, the "gun clearly outmatches its competitors in performance and durability." The move able gun has a range of 500 king, more by 150 kms which the U.S. built M109 possesses. The powerful 520 hp engine, nearly 120 hp more powerful than its U.S. counterpart allows the SP gun to travel at a 60 km per hour speed. The low ground pressure of .60 Kg/cm square is especially suitable for desert warfare. "It is distinct advantage while traveling on the loose sand of the Rajasthan desert", an army officer said.

The survivability of the weapon is enhanced by its ability to dig a pit to remain concealed. A dozer allows the digging to be completed within 20 to 40 minutes.

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India: Effects of U.S. Nuclear Policy on South Asia Viewed

BK1904021696 Madras THE HINDU in English 18 Apr 96 p 10

[Article by C. Raja Mohan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A SERIES by recent official statements issued by the U.S. Government should help remind New Delhi the home-truths that must inform India's own debate on nuclear weapons. The Clinton administration's nuclear philosophy has three basic elements. First, nuclear weapons are here to stay for the foreseeable future. There is a strong conviction in the American strategic establishment that it may not be prudent to consider the abolition of nuclear weapons in the near term. Second, the Clinton administration believes that the spread of these weapons to additional states is the biggest national security challenge facing the United States in the post-Cold War period. Third is the American readiness to use military force against the nuclear and missile capabilities of emerging powers as a supplement to the traditional approaches to the prevention of proliferation.

Throughout the last two years, the Clinton administration has reiterated the continuing centrality of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy. For those in India who harbour illusions about the elimination of nuclear weapons or at least about their declining relevance, the latest White House document on American National Security Strategy provides a useful reminder. The document declares that "the United States will retain a triad of strategic nuclear forces sufficient to deter any future hostile foreign leadership with access to strategic nuclear forces from acting against our vital interests and to convince it that seeking a nuclear advantage will be futile. Therefore, we will continue to maintain nuclear, forces of sufficient size and capability to hold at risk a broad range of assets valued by such political and military leaders."

The Clinton administration has not only reaffirmed the utility of nuclear deterrence for its national security, but also begun to define new missions for its nuclear arsenal. Over the last two years, the Pentagon has outlined the value of nuclear weapons in deterring the use of chemical and biological weapons by other states. In his testimony last month before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Chemical Weapons Convention, the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. William Perry, confirmed the current American policy of considering nuclear use against a chemical weapon attack on the American armed forces or on its allies.

Last week, Mr. Perry released a comprehensive assessment of the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the American response in the form of "counter-proliferation". Mr. Perry has compared the document titled, "Proliferation: Threat and Response" to the annual reports on "Soviet Military Power" that the Pentagon issued during the 1980s. The report marks the basic transformation of the American military strategy after the demise of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Perry leaves no one in doubt about the purpose of the new report on proliferation. "The achievement of this report", he has declared, "is to pull together, and make available to the public, comprehensive information on proliferation threats, just as the old Soviet military power did about the old Soviet missile threat, and our responses of those threats. As the previous document, this is the basic tool for government officials, for journalists, and for the interested public". Why does the U.S. feel threatened by the limited and mostly incipient nuclear capabilities of the emerging powers? Is not the U.S. far ahead of everyone in the field of nuclear weapons? Is not the conventional military power of the U.S. awesome in its superiority over all possible challengers? The answers are not difficult to discern. The U.S. wants no constraints on its ability to defend its perceived vital interests in various regions. It believes that the spread of nuclear weapons and missiles will complicate future American decisions on the use of military force in various regional contingencies. Releasing the report on proliferation, Mr. Perry has conceded that American conventional forces "are the best in the world" and capable of inflicting defeat on any adversary. "But", he argues, "a wild card in this are the weapons of mass destruction — the nuclear, chemical and biological. So we want to make sure that no one believes or tries to demonstrate that weapons of mass destruction can be used as an equaliser against U.S. conventional forces."

The Pentagon has identified three approaches to deal with the problem of proliferation; prevention, deterrence and defence. Prevention includes the traditional forms such as arms control - both global and regional - that include the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] and fissile material cut-off at the global level, regional nuclear free zones; bilateral diplomatic dissuasion, export controls and sanctions. The U.S. believes what cannot be prevented must be deterred by the American conventional and nuclear forces. Mr. Perry argues that "both our conventional and nuclear forces not only must be strong, but they must be perceived that the United States has the will power to use that strength". (It is not surprising why the U.S. is reluctant to give any credible assurances on no-first-use or non use of nuclear weapons.)

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And, finally, when prevention and deterrence fail, the U.S. should be prepared to use force against the spread of nuclear weapons. The White House National Security Strategy document says, "To minimise the vulnerability of our forces abroad to weapons of mass destruction, we are placing a high priority on improving our ability to locate, identify and disable arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, production and storage facilities for such weapons and their delivery systems".

Counter-proliferation includes various other elements such as building accurate and powerful missiles that can shoot other missiles in flight, training the U.S. armed forces for regional contingencies where weapons of mass destruction could come into play, and the development of a nuclear doctrine that assumes that many third world dictators may not abide by the traditional rules of nuclear deterrence. The Pentagon is stepping up efforts to produce intelligence on weapons of mass destruction programmes worldwide, with a special emphasis on proliferation intelligence that can be useful in waging wars against the so called "rogue states". The policy on counter-proliferation put forwards by the Pentagon is a well-considered and internally consistent response to perceived dangers of the spread of mass destruction weapons. It is integral to the post-Cold War American military strategy of fighting and winning two major regional wars simultaneously. Unlike in the 1980s when there were substantial divisions in the American establishment on how to cope with the Soviet threat, there is little dissent today against the strategy of counter-proliferation. Counter-proliferation is about the American determination to prevail in a world where diffusion of military and technological power is taking place.

As the U.S. unveils a coherent nuclear policy to meet its national security interests in a changed world, India is going through an agonising debate on its nuclear option. Immediately after the elections, the new government is likely to come under intense pressures from the Clinton administration to show movement on the nuclear issue, in particular on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. There may be some expectation in New Delhi that the issue could be finessed and some tactical deals with the U.S. can be worked out.

That expectation may be misplaced. Indian concessions on CTBT will be followed by further American demands on the fissile materials cut-off treaty, and other pressures to limit the Indian strategic options. After all the U.S. has made no secret of its long term non-proliferation objectives in South Asia: to cap, reduce and eliminate India's nuclear and missile potential. So long as India continues to fudge on its nuclear policy, and takes shelter under an ambiguous nuclear posture, the American pressures are likely to be unremitting.

New Delhi has two choices. One is to step onto the slippery nuclear slope of slow denuclearisation. The other is to take the final and long-delayed steps to transform India into an open and unambiguous nuclear weapon power. Unless New Delhi can convince the U.S. that India's status as a nuclear weapon power is formal art irrevocable it will remain one of the principal targets of the American strategy of counter-proliferation. If India does not move forward in its nuclear posture, there is a real danger that the American counter-proliferation policy will push it backward.

India: Subrahmanyam Views Debate Over Nuclear Test

BK1804123196 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 10 Apr 96 p 7

["Global Watch" column by K. Subrahmanyam: "To Test or Not To Test"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Behind the smoke screen of the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] negotiations, the nuclear proliferators are trying hard to obfuscate their actions which are enhancing the nuclear threats to nations like India.

China breaches its obligations under the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty]. Yet the US and their Uncle Toms elsewhere are taxing their brains to find new alibis for China. While talking of constructive engagement with Pakistan, the US has been wholly permissive to Pakistani proliferation and China-Pakistan nuclear technological cooperation in the weapons field. The US media is revealing bit by bit the details of three decades of nuclear cooperation between the two countries. As Mr Bhutto revealed in his death cell testimony, his negotiations with China on nuclear cooperation started 11 years before he concluded the agreement in June 1976. This is not surprising because in 1965 China used to proclaim that all countries had a right to develop nuclear weapons.

India's nuclear predicament is unique. There is no other country in the world which faces two nuclear weapon powers across its borders with a cooperative nuclear weapon relationship between the two of them. The world after 1995 instead of moving step by step towards nuclear disarmament has been moving away step by step from that objective.

The nuclear weapons have been legitimised through the unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT. The proliferators assert their right to use nuclear weapons before the World Court. They refuse to bind themselves

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to a time-bound nuclear disarmament and refuse to give a caveat-free no first use declaration. They breach obligations entered into under the NPT. They have second thoughts on Chemical Weapons Convention. They appear to have secret plans to develop new generation of nuclear weapons even after signing the CTBT as revealed by their refusal to close down their weapon laboratories or testing sites and agree to a totally comprehensive definition of a nuclear test.

India cannot afford to ignore these realities. The Uncle Toms point out that India supported a CTBT for many decades unconditionally. The world in which India did that is different from the one we face today in which these negative developments have taken place. The CTBT for India is not a disarmament or arms control issue but one involving Indian security.

There has been an overall consensus in India that faced with two nuclear neighbours and an international community accepting the legitimacy of nuclear weapons, the right to use them and permitting breaches of NPT, this country has to keep its nuclear option open. Increasingly, an opinion is gaining ground that it is not enough to keep the option open but it has to be exercised and therefore India should conduct a few more nuclear tests. Some others argue that India can project an image of deterrence without having to conduct any more tests. India has proved its capability to assemble a nuclear explosive device and that is good enough.

The new government assuming office in the second half of May will face this question and it has to arrive at an early decision. There are also one-dimensional economists who are afraid any nuclear test by India will have a catastrophic impact on our economic liberalisation and flow of foreign investments. This perception is mostly based on what our economists hear from their American counterparts and is not based on comprehensive analysis of US behaviour pattern when their economic interests clash with their declaratory political policies.

Those in favour of nuclear tests emphasis India cannot base its deterrent posture on an explosion conducted 22 years ago and it should be able to demonstrate its thermo-nuclear capability to have a credible deterrent. Our armed forces, civil, military and scientific bureaucracy and political leadership should have adequate confidence in our deterrent capability.

Pakistan got a proven weapon design from China and now even have tested one of their weapons in the Chinese test site as some Americans allege. They are in a position to do so in future. Those who argue that India can project deterrence without testing point out that we have conducted a test, and all fission weapons have successfully exploded in the first test. There is no need for India to go for thermo-nuclear devices and our minimum deterrence based on a no first use doctrine can be based on pure fission weapons of 20 kilotonne yield range. What is important is development of mobile delivery vehicles which will be survivable. Some 100 to 150 of fission war heads on Prithvis and Agnis [missiles] would serve our deterrent purpose. Therefore, this school argues it is not necessary to conduct a test at this stage. While some of those who urge testing would be willing to have India sign the CTBT after testing, a majority of those not in favour of testing but in favour of keeping the nuclear deterrent alive would oppose accession to the CTBT.

Since no government in India can give up the nuclear option the new government has to decide on testing in the next few months as it would become increasingly difficult to conduct a test after a CTBT is formally agreed upon at Geneva which is almost certain on the present indications. The decision will have to depend upon a comprehensive assessment whether the new government, the armed forces, the scientific community and the bureaucracy have enough confidence in their ability to project a deterrent posture without any further testing.

A positive decision on it has been made difficult by the lack of an adequately competent decision making structure and processes till now, and compartmentalised functioning in the area of nuclear policy, which has left most people concerned with national security ignorant on the intricacies of minimum deterrence nuclear doctrine and the exact status of our nuclear capability. The national leadership of the last 20 years did not think through the consequences of their ostrich-like policy on the crucial area of national security — the nuclear deterrence.

India: CPI-M Wants Congress, BJP 'Thoroughly Drowned' in Elections

BK1904073196 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1520 GMT 18 Apr 96

[Speech by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, leader of the Communist Party of India—Marxist, from the "Election Broadcast" program; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dear countrymen and women: Very soon you are going to give your verdict for the 11th Lok Sabha and you have to make a very crucial choice for the future of the country. The elections are taking place at a time when a deep crisis is facing our economy, political system, education, culture, and other walks of life. Due to the new economic policies of the Rao government, our economic sovereignty is at stake

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and our independent foreign policy is threatened. On the other hand, because of depredations of the communal and divisive forces our national unity and territorial integrity are also under clout, and on top of it, the spate of corrupt deals and scandals that have rocked the country [passage indistinct]. The next government will very much determine which way our nation's life goes; hence, the overriding importance of these elections.

Needless to say it is the Congress-I government at the center led by Shri Narasimha Rao that is the chief culprit responsible for bringing the country to the sorry state of affairs. Its surrender before the U.S.-dominated international financial institutions has led to a series of closures, retrenchments, and industrial sickness, adding to the already festering unemployment situation. According to the Planning Commission itself, poverty ratio has gone up from 34.4 percent to nearly 39.6 percent during the last five years, and the per capita availability of cereals and pulses has gone down to the [word indistinct] low level. Health and educational expenses are dwindling and many persistent and contagious diseases have begun to reappear. On the other hand, the pretax profit of 20 monopoly houses have gone up by 253 percent. If this situation continues, we will enter the 21st century with the largest mass of illiterate, sick, hungry, and unemployed people and suffer national disrepute.

Rao's compromise with communal forces as in Ayodhya and its reliance on purely administrative efforts to deal with secessionist threat in Jammu and Kashmir and northeast have also aggravated the situation, and, above this, government's involvement in corruption cases and patronage extended to the criminal elements, the less said the better.

The compromise of our independent foreign policy is another blot on the Rao regime. Official opposition, that is the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], is no longer in better position. Today, the record of BJP or the Shiv Sena-BJP state governments and volte-face in case of Enron proved that their economic policies are no different than from the Congress. Unprincipled support to the BSP in UP [Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh], the factional fight in Gujarat and the several other states, and the case of BJP MP exposed all its tall talks about being a clean and principled party different from the Congress. In a sense, the BJP has an even more ugly face as it threatens the life of minorities and weaker sections of our society. The involvement of its several leaders, including its national chairman, in hawala [illegal money transfer] case has debunked every claim of the BJP about providing a clean government different from that of the Congress-I.

Contrary to the Congress and the BJP, is the record of the left parties, which have always stood in defense of the toiling people's interests, of national unity, territorial integrity, and our [words indistinct]. The Left [Front]-led governments of West Bengal and Tripura and earlier of Kerala have reached [as heard] every possible relief to the people within the limits imposed by the Constitution, maintained peace, harmony and people's unity, and created an environment for the appeal to our countrymen and women that they should overwhelming support the left, democratic and secular parties to protect our future. [sentence as heard]

Vote for the CPI-M and other left parties when and wherever they are in the fray and at other places extend support to Janata Dal, Samajwadi and other secular and democratic parties so that both the Congress and the BJP and thoroughly drowned. This is the need of the hour for our national advance.

Iran

Iran: Velayati, Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Discuss Cooperation

LD1804110596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Close ties and all-embracing and extensive cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kyrgyzstan were discussed in Tehran today during a meeting between Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva and her Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

In the meeting, the Kyrgyz foreign minister said her country was interested in expanding bilateral ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran at a regional level and also in international forums such as the United Nations, Islamic Conference Organization, and Economic Cooperation Organization.

She said: The just stances of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its serious and useful endeavors to resolve regional and international issues are praiseworthy.

Otunbayeva added: The opening of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tedzhen railway is a major historical development in the region. We want to benefit from Iran's railways and other transport facilities.

Velayati, in turn, referred to the meeting of the two countries' joint economic commission simultaneously with the visit to Tehran by the Kyrgyz foreign minister. He said that at present the two countries enjoyed highly suitable grounds for cooperation in all areas.

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Iran: Rafsanjani—Iranian Expertise of Benefit to Kyrgyzstan

LD1804193896 Tehran IRNA in English 1712 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 18, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here on Thursday [18 April] with the coming of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railroad link into operation next month, one of the obstacles in the way of Tehran-Bishkek relations will be eliminated.

In a meeting the visiting Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva, President Rafsanjani said when the railroad becomes operational, the regional countries including Kyrgyzstan would gain access to the world markets in addition to its boosting trade with Iran.

He voiced Iranian willingness to go into partnership in industrial and technological projects in Kyrgyzstan, emphasizing the fact that Iranian partnership with Kyrgyz would be more economical than the presence of western companies in the republic.

Otunbayeva pointed out that her country is keen in benefitting from the Iranian worthy experience in development.

The Kyrgyz foreign minister interpreted the negotiations with Iranian officials as 'useful', adding that according to an agreement reached in Tehran the foreign ministers of the two countries will regularly hold talks to discuss matters related to bilateral relations.

She finally indicated that Iranian products are in demand in Kyrgyz market and hoped Iranian exports to her country will be boosted up.

Iran: Rafsanjani, OPEC President Discuss Realistic Oil Prices

LD1604172996 Tehran IRNA in English 1707 GMT 16 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 16, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in a meeting here today with the president of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), said OPEC member states should coordinate efforts to increase oil prices oil to their real worth on the world market, while maintaining their respective output quotas.

He also told the rotating president of OPEC, Algeria's Amar Makhloufi, that third world countries despite their rich resources, have unfortunately failed to use them as a lever against the oppressive and exploitative methods of the domineering countries.

Rafsanjani said that those OPEC members which do not respect their quotas will in fact turn out to be the real losers in the end. On the hand, he added, non-OPEC producers should not take advantage of the goodwill of OPEC by overproducing this vital natural substance in a bid to achieve the supposed stabilising of prices.

The Iranian president, evaluating the oil price much higher than the current figures, said the price determined by OPEC was the minimum rate for this important fuel.

In the meeting, which was also attended by OPEC Secretary General Rilwanu Lukman, Makhloufi praised the sound and logical stand of Iran at the organization, and said that Iran, as one of the founders of OPEC, is considered the most important member of the organization.

He briefed the Iranian president on the latest developments at OPEC as well as the future prospect of oil on world markets. He hoped for Iran's continued all-out support at OPEC.

Iran: New Zealand Delegation Discusses Trade, Oil Cooperation

LD1704120996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Philip Burdon, the New Zealand commerce minister, who is in Tehran at the head of a delegation from that country to attend the sixth joint economic committee of Iran and New Zealand, at a meeting with our country's commerce minister today, called for raising the level of trade between Iran and New Zealand.

At the meeting Mr. [Yahha] ol-Eshaq declared Iran's preparedness to buy meat and dairy products from New Zealand. He said: Iran is also prepared to export carpets, industrial goods, and clothing to New Zealand.

At another meeting today with our country's oil minister [Gholamreza Aqazadeh], the commerce minister of New Zealand expressed his country's desire to increase oil cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The joint economic committee of Iran and New Zealand, which began in Tehran yesterday, will continue until 31 Farvardin [19 April].

Iran: President Meets With New Zealand Commerce Minister

LD1704183196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a meeting with [President 'Ali Akbar] Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the commerce minister of New Zealand described the Islamic Republic of Iran as a gateway to world trade with the Central Asian states.

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Philip Burdon called for the expansion of relations between New Zealand and the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields.

During the meeting, Hashemi-Rafsanjani referred to the valuable experiences of New Zealand in agriculture and animal husbandry, and said that our country was ready to exchange know-how and expand cooperation in various fields.

Iran: Borujerdi Holds Talks With Afghan Shiite Leader Akbari

LD1704143496 Tehran IRNA in English 1244 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 17, IRNA — Iran is ready to continue offering humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and to restore peace in Afghanistan, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi said here Tuesday [16 April].

Borujerdi made the remark in a meeting with the member of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami (Islamic Unity Party) Central Council Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Akbari. Akbari told Borujerdi that the party beleived that war would not solve the problems facing Afghanistan, but rather the best solution to the plight was to holding talks with an aim of reaching understanding among warring groups. Iran as an Islamic country neighboring Afghanistan could play important role in the restoration of peace and beginning of reconstruction in that country, he underlined. Akbari said that cohesion of Muslim Shiites, as an important factor in Afghanistan, was necessary for solving the country's problems, he said.

Borujerdi said that the oppressed and Muslim people of Afghanistan were looking forward to seeing a lasting peace, vowing that Iran will continue its mediation efforts to help restore peace to Afghanistan.

Iran: Vice President, Swedish Ambassador Discuss Ties, Lebanon

LD1804062096 Tehran IRNA in English 0555 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 18, IRNA — Ambassador of Sweden to Tehran, Hans Andersson in a meeting Wednesday [17 April] evening with vice-president for executive affairs, Mohammad Hashemi, called for further expansion of economic relations between the two countries.

Hashemi referring to the recent crimes of the Zionists in Lebanon criticized attitude of international bodies towards the massacre of the defenseless people of south Lebanon at the hands of criminal Zionists.

Discriminatory treatment of international organizations towards the terrorist acts of the Zionist regime has impaired their credit at international scale, the vice-president pointed out.

He said while the world has become aware of the terrorist nature of criminal israel, international bodies cannot remain indifferent towards the Zionists' terrorist-oriented regime.

Hashemi also touched on the efforts of the U.S. and Zionists to impair relations of europe with the world of Islam and said if Europe comes to understand realities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it will definitely not be influenced by the U.S. false propaganda.

On Iran's economic gains, he told the Swedish ambassador that Iran's gross national product is growing noticeably, adding that Iran's economy has improved.

He pointed out that broader relations between Iran and Europe will be availing to both sides.

The Swedish diplomat said that at the midst of European efforts to promote peace in the Middle East region, the Zionist attacks on Lebanon came as a shock.

The ambassador stressed his country's interest in expanding mutual relations and pointed out that increase in volume of Iran's non-oil exports last year as well as repayment of its foreign debts indicate the growing economic power of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"In my opinion, Iran's economic prospect is promising", the Swedish ambassador pointed out.

Iran: Ambassador Explores Ways To Expand Cooperation With Russia

LD1904092096 Tehran IRNA in English 0831 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, Apr 19 (IRNA) — Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Mehdi Safari and deputy head of the Russian Federation Council Valeriy Kukov here Thursday [18 April] explored ways of expanding Tehran-Moscow cooperation, especially in the area of parliamentary affairs.

Kukov, also president of the Autonomous Republic of Kabardina-Balkaria, welcomed expansion of bilateral ties and lauded Iran's wise stands vis-a-vis domestic issues of Russia.

He considered the recent visit to moscow of Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati as a turning point in the history of bilateral relations and said that Iran and Russia shared many viewpoints on different issues, including opposition against NATO's advancement to East Europe.

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He added that good neighborliness will serve as an important and firm basis for expansion of bilateral relations, especially the parliamentary ties.

Moreover, the Iranian diplomat called on Kukov to work for greater expansion of regional cooperation.

Iran: Velayati Commences Tour of Turkey, Syria, Maghreb

LD1904061296 Tehran IRNA in English 0559 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Apr 19 (IRNA) — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati left here Friday [19 April] morning for official visits to Turkey, Syria and the Maghreb with messages from President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to heads of these countries.

Velayati is to discuss with officials of these countries the most important political issues relevant to bilateral, regional and international relations as well as ways of pressing the Zionist regime to stop massacre of the defenseless Lebanese people.

Iran: Joint Chamber of Commerce Inaugurated in Turkmenistan

LD1904090696 Tehran IRNA in English 0758 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ashgabat, April 19, IRNA — Irano-Turkmen joint Chamber of Commerce was officially inaugurated here on Thursday [18 April].

Participants in a joint session, attended by deputy head of Iran's Chamber of Industries and Mines Mir-Mohammad Sadeqi and head of Turkmen Chamber of Commerce Kelyov, here on Thursday elected directors of the chamber.

The chamber will undertake the task of upgrading bilateral commercial transactions and solve executive problems faced by the Iranian and Turkmen businessmen.

Iran: Mohajerani Against Direct Talks With United States

LD1304164396 Tehran SOBH in Persian 9 Apr 96 p 1

["Mohajerani: I Do Not Believe in Talks With The United States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the publication, in SOBH on 15. 12. 1374 [5 March 1996], of remarks made by Ata'ollah Mohajerani at a gathering of Tabriz University students, his office has sent an explanation setting out Mr. Mohajerani's remarks regarding the article entitled "Direct Talks" as follows:

"Had I known about the red line drawn by the eminent leader of the revolution [Khamene'i] regarding talks with the United States, I would not have written such an article. However, since he later spoke of it [the red line], I obviously do not subscribe to that idea [of direct talks] any longer. I should add that, presently, both because of the leader's stance and because of the overall conditions of the world, I definitely do not believe in holding talks with the United States."

It was also stated in the explanation that what Mr. Mohajerani said about [Tehran Mayor] Mr. Karbaschi was that he was one of the classmates of Mr. Khatami, the former minister of [Islamic] guidance, and the late Mr. Ahmad Khomeyni and others.

Iran: Seventh Phase of Amphibious Maneuvers Held in Caspian Sea

LD1704161896 Tehran IRNA in English 1130 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bandar-e 'Anzali, Gilan Prov., April 17, IRNA — The seventh phase of amphibious maneuvers codenamed 'Mirza Kuchak Khan' was staged in the Caspian Sea waters Tuesday night.

In this stage, mine sweeping operations, landing and displacement of troops and airlift of military equipment were carried out by Iranian marines.

The participant forces also attacked and overran the positions of an hypothetical enemy.

Iran: Navy War Games End in Persian Gulf

LD1804141496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1200 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Fateh [triumphant] exercises were successfully completed by the brave personnel of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the blue waters of the Persian Gulf after all its objectives were reached.

[Correspondent] On the seventh and last day of the Fateh naval exercises, the participating units successfully carried out underwater reconnaissance, aerial and surface firing, bombarding the positions of an imaginary enemy on the coast, electronic warfare, exchange of intelligence, surface and underwater control drills, and sea parades. [passage omitted]

Iran: Military Exercise Held in Northern Waters of Persian Gulf

LD1804142096 Tehran IRNA in English 1409 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abadan, Khuzestan Prov. April 18, IRNA — To mark the army military, a military

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exercise, codenamed 'Shahed 3', was conducted by the Iranian marines in the northern waters of the Persian Gulf and Khor Mussa waterway on Thursday [18 April].

The one-day war game included assault on hypothetical enemy and destrying their positions as well as mine sweeping operations in a hypothetical mined area.

Iran: Official Denies Fortifying Border With Turkey

NC1804143096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 17 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Governor of Western Azerbaijan Mohammad Askari has denied claims that Iran's military forces have fortified the Turkish-Iranian border. Askari said that military units in Turkey have been based in areas near Iraq, Syria, and Iran to resist opponents of the Turkish Government. It is known that many of the Western media organs recently claimed that Iran has deployed military units near Turkey's border. Their objective is to disrupt relations between Iran and Turkey.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Denies Turkish Allegation on 'Hit Team'

LD1804131596 Tehran IRNA in English 1303 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 18, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Ministry on Thursday [18 Arpil] denied an allegation raised by the Turkish newspaper, MILLIYET, that it had dispatched a hit team to Turkey to assassinate former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller.

Milliyet has qouted head of Turkey's intelligence agency Sunmaz Kuksal as saying that Iran had dispatched a team to Turkey to assassinate the former Turkish prime minister.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi, termed the allegation as baseless, saying that raising such accusations against iran is a new method employed by the intelligence services of the Zionist regime.

Mohammadi said wherever the Zionists step they immediately begin to pit Muslims against one another.

He said the Zionists spare no inhuman acts such as raising false charges to gain their sinister goals.

Iran: French Ambassador Presents Lebanon Peace Plan

LD1804193096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a meeting with Mr. [Mohammad Javad] Zarif, our country's deputy foreign minister for international affairs, the French ambassador to Tehran presented a plan to end aggression against Lebanon. The plan, drawn up by the French foreign minister, explains actions taken by France to end the Zionist regime's aggression against Lebanon.

During the meeting, Mr. Zarif referred to the Zionist atrocities in the region, particularly its recent aggression against Lebanon, and condemned such atrocities. He stressed the need for influential countries to endeavor to end the aggressors' atrocities and crimes against the Lebanese nation.

In a separate meeting with Mr. Zarif, the Italian ambassador, representing the European Union, called on Iran to participate in collective efforts to end war, bloodshed, and aggression in Lebanon.

Our country's deputy foreign minister for international affairs announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate in collective and international efforts in this regard.

Iran: Israeli 'State Terrorism' Attains 'New Heights of Savagery'

LD1804171896 Tehran IRNA in English 1657 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Southern Lebanon, April 18, IRNA — Israel's state terrorism in Lebanon which entered its second week today, reached new heights of savagery with an attack on a base of U.N. peacekeeping forces, leaving 65 refugees dead and over 150 others injured. The attack by the Zionists on the U.N. post manned by Fijian soldiers in the village of Qana - 13 kms southeast of Tyre - where 500 displaced persons had taken refuge, sent shockwaves all around and added new dimensions to the blatant Israeli aggression against the sovereignty of Lebanon.

The attack occured this morning when several Israeli aircraft targetted the U.N. post. Zionist military helicopters were not content with blowing up of the refugee shelter but hovered above and fired on ambulances rushing to the scenes. At least one ambulance was seen bursting in flames as a result.

In another attack today, the Zionists targeted a house in al-Nabatiyah killing a mother, her seven children and a

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cousin. The father of the children is reportedly away on the annual hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

The unabated Israeli brutalities against the innocent people of Lebanon on Thursday [18 April], made Lebanese Health Minister Marwan Hamadah brand the Zionist entity as "war criminal". [passage omitted]

Iran: UN Security Council Criticized for Ignoring Israeli Attacks

LD1904101196 Tehran IRNA in English 0825 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.N., New York, April 19, IRNA — Iran's deputy permanent representative to the U.N. Majid Takht-Ravanchi said here on Thursday [18 April] that failure to take the necessary steps on the part of the Security Council has led to further human tragedies in Lebanon.

Addressing the Security Council session, Takht-Ravanchi expressed sympathy with the people and government of Lebanon for the loss of lives in the mass killing of innocent civilians in southern Lebanon.

He said that three days ago Iranian mission announced its stand on the Israeli aggression on Lebanon and warned that if the Security Council failed to take the necessary step to end the current violation of international law by the Zionist regime, the aggressor will be encouraged to go on with its crimes.

He referred to the barbaric attacks of Israel on the U.N. refugee camp in southern Lebanon on Thursday which led to martyrdom of 100 refugees. He said the mass killing of Thursday is the natural outcome of failure of the Security Council in this respect.

The Iranian envoy said that if the Security Council had shown the appropriate reaction to the Zionist regime's crimes last week, Israel would not have gone on with its crimes against Lebanese women and children at such a large scope and magnitude.

Takht-Ravanchi asked, "Who should be blamed for the human tragedy occured on Thursday in Lebanon? The Zionist regime who deliberately targets civilian and economic installations in Lebanon or those who through their silence towards the Zionist crimes have given green light to the continued brutality of the Zionists?"

He urged the Security Council to condemn in the strongest possible term the continued Israeli onslaught on Lebanon and the heavy mass killing of the civilians and to take an immediate action to stop the Zionist regime's terrorism in Lebanon.

Takht-Ravanchi emphasized the importance of the U.N. resolution 425 which demands immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the aggressor Israeli forces from the southern Lebanon.

He said any attempt to ignore the resolution and the legitimization of the occupation would be detrimental to the credibility of the U.N. in general and the Security Council in particular.

Iran: Velayati Says Hizballah Unscathed Following Israeli Attacks

LD1804212396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Our country's Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on Thursday [18 April] night spoke to our correspondent about the Zionist regime's most recent bestial attack against the innocent gathering of the defenseless people of Lebanon at the headquarters of the UN peacekeeping forces near Tyre, which has left around 100 martyrs. He said:

[Begin Velayati recording] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Greetings to the listeners of the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is with much regret that I have to point out that the longer the savage attacks of the Zionist regime against Lebanon continue, the number of victims and martyrs of this most regrettable and sad war increase. [passage omitted]

The world media, which are under the influence of the Zionists, the American media, and those of a number of European countries, in line with the Zionists, have always falsely maintained that Israel is only attacking Hezbollah bases. That was done in order to justify the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. Anyone who knows the least bit about Lebanon knows that such an operation is not practical. It is not possible to pinpoint Hezbollah, its bases, or the homes of the Hezbollahis from a plane among the large urban conglomeration of Beirut, Tyre, Sidon, and al-Nabatiyah. It was obvious that this was a deceitful ploy and they continued their indiscriminate bombardment of various parts of Lebanon and the killing of innocent people. Despite their [Israeli] claims, the defense capability of the Hezbollah has remained unscathed and Hezbollah continues to defend the territory and people of Lebanon as before.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, once again, very strongly condemns this savage act of aggression and expresses its regret at the inaction of the United Nations and the indifference of the supposedly humanitarian world forums that have remained so apathetic toward this lengthy and sad tragedy.

As in the past, we will continue our humanitarian assistance to the government and people of Lebanon,

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and we are confident that the resistance of the people of Lebanon will bring the Zionist regime to its knees.

Iran: Khamene'i Urges Hizballah To 'Strike Back' at Israel

NC1904102696 Paris AFP in English 1012 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 19 (AFP) — Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i urged Hizballah guerrillas on Friday [19 April] to strike back at Israel for the massacre of civilians in south Lebanon.

Khamene'i, in a message to the leader of the Iranian-backed Hizballah, Hasan Nasrallah, said he was "deeply saddened" by Thursday's killing of almost 100 people in Israeli shelling of a UN refugee compound in south Lebanon.

"Dignity requires that you withstand Zionist attacks and strike a blow to make them remorseful of their acts," he said. "The slightest sign of yielding would make (Israel) bolder and more beastly."

Iran: 'Text' of Khamene'i Letter to Hizballah Leader on Attacks

LD1904104196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution, has issued a message addressed to Hojjat ol-Eslam Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah in Lebanon. This is the text of the exalted leader's message:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Combatant scholar, Hojjat ol-Eslam Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, may God prolong his life and honor. Greetings to you.

The bloody events of recent days in Lebanon, perpetrated by the criminal hands of the usurper, bloodthirsty Zionists, and by the direct support of the arrogant and reckless United States, have plunged myself and all the Iranian nation and their servants in the Islamic Republic government into deep sorrow. This terrible human tragedy, whose victims are women, children, and civilian men, proves how audacious, totally unethical, and regardless of international undertakings the usurper government of Palestine is in its aggression against the lives, property, and independence of nations, and how it exploits the silence of some Arab governments in order to continue its aggression against Arab and Islamic territories.

The Lebanese nation and Government has shown valor and honor in this tremendous test and has not surrendered to the evil, greedy enemy. That stance is worthy of praise. [passage omitted]] Any sign of softening toward the Zionists will make them more audacious and vicious. That is the result of 50 years of experience by the neighbors of Palestine and the Palestinians.

Rely on God, seek help from Him, and endure the hardships, so that God bestows on you victory with honor. You are in the frontline of the defense of Islamic territories against aggressors. All Muslims of the world and Islamic states are bound by a duty to defend Lebanon and to assist the defenders of its nation and government. I beseech Almighty God to acquaint all Muslim nations and governments with that supreme duty.

I pray for you and the Lebanese nation and beseech Almighty God for your patience and victory, and wish the highest honor for the martyrs of this incident and patience for their kin.

God's blessing be upon you and all the pious worshippers of God.

[Signed] 'Ali al-Hoseyni al-Khamene'i,

Friday 30 Thi al-Hajjah 1416 [19 April]

Iran: Official Calls For Stronger Armed Forces

LD1404181696 Tehran IRNA in English 1809 GMT 14 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 14, IRNA — First Vice-President Hasan Habibi here on Sunday [14 April] called for strengthening of the armed forces to foil the efforts of the enemies of the Islamic revolution.

Speaking to a group of armed forces commanders on the occasion of the first scientific and research festival, he said the resolve and determination of Islamic Iran against the bullying and conspiracies of global arrogance, explains for the latter's machinations to deal a blow to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"We should exercise vigilance, we need alert and well-prepared armed forces," Habibi stressed.

He reiterated that Iran's military capability is not against any regional state and the concern expressed by certain neighbouring states in this regard, is the result of misleading attempts by aliens and outsiders.

Habibi said a powerful and strong Iran will serve as a shield against the plots and meddlings of global arrogance in the region.

He said that under the circumstances the U.S. is busy making every attempt to slow the progress of Islamic

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Iran in science and technology, Iranian experts and scientists are required to step up their efforts to help reach self-sufficiency in all peaceful sectors.

He uwarded the officials in charge of self-sufficency jihad of the armed forces with certificates of honour for their meritorious studies in defense research.

Iran: Runoff Polls Open for 5th Majles Elections

LD1904060696 Tehran IRNA in English
0528 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 19, IRNA — Polls for the run-off elections for the Fifth Majles opened at 8:00 am this morning and will remain open for 10 hours. The period will be extended by the interior ministry if necessary.

The run-off elections are being held in 75 constituencies to determine the fate of 123 seats in the 270-seat majlis. Some 246 candidates throughout the country are contending for the seats.

In Tehran Constituency electorates will be voting for 28 candidates from among the 56 hopefuls today. In the elections of March 8 only two candidates from Tehran, Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri and Mrs. Faezeh Hashemi secured the adequate number of votes to be elected to the majles. The remaining seats will be decided today.

According to the election law in the initial stage of the elections each contending candidate should obtain at least one third of the votes cast in each constituency. However, in the run-off elections any candidate who obtains the relative majority will be elected.

Along with the elections for the majles, elections for the 83- member assembly of experts will be held in the Provinces of Tehran and Mazandaran to elect two representatives to replace the late Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni and Ayatollah Mohammad Hoseyn Laeini.

The elections to a second term of the assembly of experts were held on October 8, 1990.

Iran: Ayatollah Khamene'i Casts Vote in Majles Elections

LD1904063296 Tehran IRNA in English
0553 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Apr 19 (IRNA) — Shortly after the polls opened here this morning the leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i cast his vote.

The leader, speaking to reporters, pointed out that the importance of the run-off majles elections is not less than the first round.

The leader also invited all the electorates to cast their votes at the earliest.

The supreme leader added that electorates should select those who are truely committed to God and Islam.

The leader said that electorates should have no other consideration other than pleasing the God almighty. "This is of vital importance," Ayatollah Khamene'i emphasized.

The supreme leader also said that he is confident that this time too the Iranian nation will emerge successful of this test just as they have always been in similar occasions in the past.

Iran: Rafsanjani Casts Majles, Assembly of Experts Election Vote

LD1904084196 Tehran IRNA in English
0751 GMT 19 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 19, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here this morning cast his vote for candidates of the Fifth Majles in the run-off elections and also for the representative of Tehran to the Assembly of Experts.

Talking to reporters, President Rafsanjani expressed hope that irrespective of their rivalries during election campaign, after being elected all deputies will establish sincere cooperation in the Majles.

The president speaking after casting vote at Jamaran Mosque, in northern Tehran, said that he was highly satisfied with the outcome of the March 8 elections for the 270-seat Majles adding that he was highly impressed by the turnout in which 133 were elected to the Majles.

The president said that although unlike the March 8 elections the run-off elections were not held nationwide, the competition was serious. In this elections too the electorates will feel responsible and cast their votes, he told reporters.

President Rafsanjani added that a deputy sent to the Majles with an overwhelming number of votes will feel more determined and more powerful in discharging his duties in the Majles.

He said that it is the legal, rational and logical duty of each any every electorate to cast ballot in this elections. He added that abstention will do no good and will only be a sign of indifference towards the fate of the country.

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The president added that the variety of the candidates provided the electorates with a good chance to choose from among the contenders.

Iran: Foreign Radio 'Propaganda' Attempts To Mar Elections

LD1904094096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1708 GMT 18 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the eve of the second round of the Majles elections, the enemies of the ruling Islamic Republic system and the great Iranian nation have once more embarked on a political propaganda confrontation against our people and are attempting to influence the decisive votes of the Iranians when electing their representatives in the Majles. In that regard, alien Persian language broadcasters, after their failure to gain their propaganda objectives in the first round of the elections, have stepped into the arena to try their luck once more.

Of course, in this fresh round of propaganda, those radio stations speak less of the elections being boycotted by groups opposed to the Islamic Republic system and of their earlier emphasis aimed at reducing the turnout. They are trying, instead, to point out the differences of views of various factions and make out such natural instances as deep rifts and manifestations of what they themselves call — the power struggle in Iran. [passage omitted]

The combination of all that propaganda indicates this trend in foreign propaganda, foreigners who think that by removing the people's trust towards the essential establishments of the Islamic Republic system they will be able to persuade them to vote for individuals affiliated to aliens and thus enter into the Majles their own agents of influence.

The objective of the enemies of the Islamic Revolution, as the American radio asserts, is to encourage the people to move away from Islamic and national values for which they have struggled, offered martyrs, and endured much hardship. [passage omitted]

Our heroic nation, by its active and extensive turnout tomorrow, will once again respond with action to such imaginings of foreigners and their affiliates and will remind them that they will preserve their political independence by choosing faithful and committed candidates.

Iran: Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri Urges Voters To Shun Liberals

LD1704184196 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 15 Apr 96 pp1,13

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran: Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri yesterday appealed to voters in the 19th April run-off elections not to vote for the liberals. He did not explain what he meant by "liberal," but was apparently referring to the construction executives, or G-6, the only rival group fighting in the election of the fifth term of the Majles.

"Liberal" is a term used by Iran's rightist faction for those who favor closer ties with the West. The rightists also claim that liberals undermine the values, or the pillars of the Islamic revolution.

"How come liberals are in the field (of the elections)? Why were their candidacies not rejected by the Guardian Council?" one expert on election affairs asked when talking to 'Iran News'.

Tehran constituency candidate, Abdullah Nuri, addressing a press conference Saturday [13 April], denied that the G-6 belonged to the liberals. He said the Guardian Council would have rejected the names of the G-6 if they had shared the thinking of the "liberals."

The rightists also claim that the liberals want the late imam's fatwa on apostate Salman Rushdie to be kept in cold storage. They say the liberals want Iran to be indifferent to the on-going peace process in the Middle East.

Nateq-Nuri, however, appealed to voters to participate in next Friday's elections with as much enthusiasm as they did in the first round on 8 March.

Meanwhile, Tehran's Justice Department yesterday warned would-be violators of electoral campaign law that strict action would be taken against them if they were found defacing posters of rivals.

It was noticed yesterday that G-6 publicity posters in various places had been torn up by unknown violators.

It was also noticed that campaigning had accelerated in Tehran and those who received minimum votes in the 8th March elections had escalated their publicity to draw voter attention.

In the meantime, the leftist faction expressed anger at the cancellation of the first round of elections in Esfahan.

Leftist Abdullah Nuri, in a press conference Wednesday [10 April], said: "The reasons for the cancellation of Esfahan constituency elections are not sound."

Experts believe that the 19 April elections will be decisive in determining which faction enjoys a majority in the 270-member house.

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